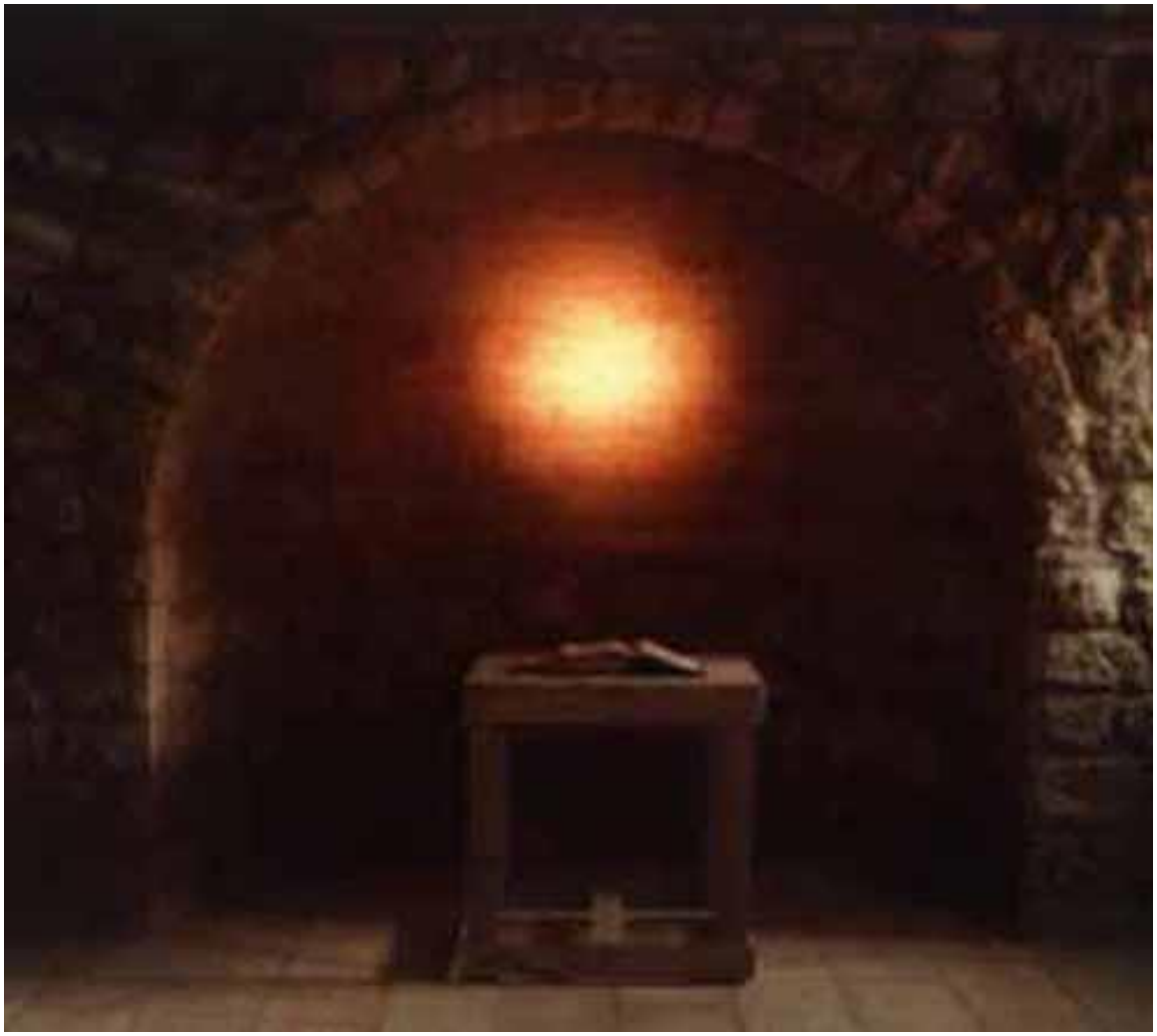

# THE WRITINGS OF JOHN
# AQF Code: CTTNBC-005
# Total Hours: 40



Rev: A
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**SUBJECT NAME: THE WRITINGS OF JOHN**
**AQF CODE: CTTNBC-005**
**COURSE HOURS: 40**

## COURSE OUTCOMES:

The aim of this module is to examine in detail, the writings of John, including:

- The Gospel of John,
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- The Book of Revelation

## METHOD OF COURSE DELIVERY:

1. The students will research these topics under the guidance of the teacher, to determine the following, as detailed below:

    a. The students will identify who is the author of each of these books and develop a personal profile of this person
    b. To whom were these books specifically written?
    c. When they were written?
    d. The main theme of each of these books.

2. The class will break into small groups to undertake this research. The group will present their findings as a presentation to the whole class body. Each member of the specific group will be allocated a group mark as part of their assessment results.

## ASSESSMENT METHODS:

As per above, the individual students will receive a group mark, which will form 100 % of their marks for this module. This means 3 presentations making up the total mark for this module, with the first two assessments being 30% each and the final assessment being 40% of the total mark.


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**Overview of New Testament Timeline:** The Books in the New Testament, were not written in the order they appear in the Scriptures. Below is a timeline of the actual dates and historical events of this era.

| New Testament Timeline | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Books of the Bible Written** | **Approximate Dates: AD** | **Historical Events** |
| | 30 | The Church Begins: (Acts 1) |
| | 35 | The Dispersion and Saul's persecution of the Christians (Acts 8:1). Paul's Conversion: (Acts 9) |
| | 40 | Paul attends Holy Spirit School in the Arabian desert, then called by Barnabas to the church at Antioch, as "teacher" (Acts 11) |
| | 46 | Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13) |
| James & Galatians | 49 | It is accepted by most scholars that the Book of James was in fact the first New Testament document ever written. |
| | 50 | Jerusalem Council and Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15) |
| 1 & 2 Thessalonians | 51-52 | |
| | 54 | Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18) Nero becomes Emperor |
| 1 Corinthians, Mark: between 55–65 | 55 | |
| 2 Corinthians | 56–57 | |
| Romans | 57 | |
| | 58 | Paul Arrested (Acts 21) |
| Luke, Matthew: between 60–65 | 60 | |
| Ephesians, Colossians, & Philemon | 61 | |
| | 61–63 | Paul's Roman Imprisonment (Acts 28) |
| Philippians 1 Peter: about 62–64 | 62 | |
| Acts | 63–65 | |
| 1 Timothy & Titus | 64 | Rome Burns |
| Jude | 65 | |
| 2 Timothy | 66–67 | |
| 2 Peter | 67 | |
| Hebrews[1] | 67–68 | Paul and Peter Executed |
| | 68 | Essenes hide their Library of Bible Manuscripts in Caves in Wadi Qumran by the Dead Sea. |
| | 70 | Jerusalem & the Temple Destroyed, as prophesied by Jesus |
| | 75 | John Begins Ministry in Ephesus. Rome Begins Construction of the Coliseum. |
| | 79 | Mt. Vesuvius Erupts in Italy – great destruction. |
| John | 80–85 | |
| 1 John | 85–90 | |
| 2 & 3 John | 90 | In about 94 AD, John is banished to the Isle of Patmos. |
| Revelation | 95 | |
| | 98 | John's Death at Ephesus |

[1] I believe that Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews just before His death, to reinforce his testimony to the Jewish Christians that Jesus is the Messiah. This belief is also confirmed in some Bible Translations.


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# OVERVIEW OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1. **Introduction**

He (God the Father) spoke, and galaxies whirled into place, stars burned the heavens, and planets began orbiting their suns — words of awesome, unlimited, unleashing power. He spoke again, and the waters and lands were filled with plants and creatures, running, swimming, growing, and multiplying — words of animating, breathing, pulsing life.

Again He spoke, and man and woman were formed, thinking, speaking, and loving — words of personal and creative glory. Eternal, infinite, unlimited — He was, is, and always will be, the Maker and Lord of all that exists.

And then He came in the flesh to a tiny spot in the universe called planet Earth — the mighty Creator becoming part of His creation, limited by time and space and susceptible to age, sickness, and death. Propelled by love, He came to rescue and save, offering forgiveness and life. **He is the Word: He is Jesus Christ**!

**It is this truth that the Apostle John presents in this book**. John's Gospel is not a life of Christ; it is a powerful argument for the incarnation, a conclusive demonstration that Jesus was, and is, the very heaven-sent Son of God - the only source of eternal life.

2. **The Writer of this Gospel & His Character:**

**Author:** John the Apostle, son of Zebedee and Salome, and younger brother of James. Thunder evokes fear and images of a pending storm. We use *thunder* to describe a deafening sound, such as in "thunderous applause"; approaching danger, as in "thundering herd"; and explosive anger, as in "thundered response." So we would expect someone nicknamed ***Son of Thunder*** to be powerful, loud, and unpredictable. That's what Jesus named two of his disciples—Zebedee's sons, James and John (Mark 3:17) — for he knew their tendency to explode.

Sure enough, when Jesus and the Twelve were rebuffed by a Samaritan village, these rough-necked fishermen suggested ***calling down fire from heaven to destroy the whole village***. Jesus had to calm down the outspoken brothers and explain that vengeance was not his way (Luke 9:52-56).

Just before that incident, John had told Jesus that he had tried to stop a man from driving out demons ***"because he is not one of us."*** Jesus had explained that he didn't have an exclusive club, ***"for whoever is not against you is for you"*** (Luke 9:49-50 NIV).

In addition to being forceful and angry, James and John also seem to have been quite self-centred. They implored Jesus "to do for us whatever we ask." Then they requested seats of honour and power in the kingdom. When the other disciples heard about what James and John had said, they became indignant (Mark 10:35-44). Yet Jesus also saw potential in these thundering brothers — he knew what they would become.

So Jesus brought both (James & John) with Peter, into his inner circle, allowing them to see him transfigured on the mountain (Mark 9:2-13). And as Jesus was dying on the cross, **he entrusted Mary, his mother, into John's care,** the only disciple recorded to be present at the crucifixion of Jesus (John 19:26-27).

John was following in his father Zebedee's footsteps as a fisherman when Jesus called him (Matthew 4:21; Mark 1:19-20). His mother was Salome (Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40). His brother, James, was also one of the Twelve and the first apostle to be martyred (Acts 12:2). They fished on the Sea of Galilee with Peter and Andrew.

One might predict that someone with a personality like John's would self-destruct. Certainly this person would die in a fight or in a clash with the Roman government. At the very least, he would be discarded by the church as self-seeking and power-hungry. But such was not the case.

***Instead, John was transformed into someone who was strong but gentle*, straightforward but loving, courageous but humble**.


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**There is no dramatic event to account for John's transformation — it must have come from being with Jesus, being accepted, loved, and affirmed by the Lord, and then being filled with the Holy Spirit.**

So overwhelmed was John by Jesus that he did not mention himself by name in the Gospel that bears his name. Instead, he wrote of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20, 24). ***What a humble change for one who, at first, had wanted power, position and recognition***.

- *John stands as a great example of Christ's power to transform lives*.
- *Christ can change anyone — no-one is beyond hope*!
- Jesus accepted John as he was, a Son of Thunder, and changed him into what he would become, The Apostle of Love.

**John's ministry.** John was a Palestinian and a Galilean. He was not from Jerusalem, but from the country. This is why John shows such familiarity in his writing with the geography of the area and perhaps why John singles out the system of religious leaders who were in control in Jerusalem.

Many believe that John was first a disciple of John the Baptist. His mentor pointed him to Jesus when Jesus passed by. Then Jesus and John spent the day together (1:35-39). At that time, John must have become a part-time disciple, for later we find him back fishing with his brother, James, and their father, Zebedee.

***But the next time Jesus called them***, John and James left everything, father and boat included, and followed him. This was after Jesus had turned water into wine (2:1-11), **had cleared the temple the first time** (2:12-25), and had been visited by Nicodemus at night (3:1-21).

It was also after Herod had imprisoned John the Baptist (Luke 3:19-20), Jesus had spoken with the woman at the well (Luke 4:1-26), and Jesus had been rejected at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30).

In the Gospels, John is mentioned by name when he was selected as one of the Twelve and called a Son of Thunder (Mark 1:19; 3:13-19), when he saw Jesus transfigured (Luke 9:28-36), when he told Jesus about stopping a man who was driving out demons (Luke 9:49), when he asked Jesus about calling down fire on the Samaritan village (Luke 9:52-56), when he asked Jesus about sitting next to him in the kingdom (Mark 10:35-44), and when he was sent with Peter by Jesus to make preparations for the Last Supper (Luke 22:8).

John was a member of the Twelve, of the Inner Circle of the disciples.

- John was an eyewitness to the miracles,
- An "ear-witness" to the parables, and
- He saw the confrontations with the Pharisees and other leaders, and
- John was a student of Jesus' special words of instruction.
- John helped prepare the Last Supper,
- and was in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- He was the only one of the Twelve at the cross.
- John also saw the empty tomb and,
- John was in the upper room, at Pentecost
- He was also on the beach after the resurrection, and at the Ascension.
- We read more about John in the first chapters of Acts. There he is numbered among the Twelve (Acts 1:13) when they chose a replacement for Judas Iscariot.
- Then we see him ministering with Peter at the temple (Acts 3:3-11) and,
- In the confrontation with the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-31).
- During the growing persecution, after many believers had been scattered, Peter and John were sent by the other apostles to verify the validity of the conversions in Samaria (Acts 8:14-25).


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- John is mentioned only one other time in Acts (in 12:2), as the brother of James, who was executed by King Herod.
- Beyond being a leader in the Jerusalem church (as mentioned in Galatians 2:9), little is known of John's ministry.

**When John wrote his epistles to Gentile congregations (1 John),** "the chosen lady" (2 John NIV), and Gaius (3 John), he simply identified himself as "the elder." So it is thought that John must have been the only surviving apostle at that time. He wrote those letters from Ephesus about AD 85–90, just after writing his Gospel.

**In about AD 94, John was banished to the island of Patmos** (during the reign of Domitian), because he refused to stop preaching and teaching about Jesus Christ. There, this wise and elder apostle received the dramatic vision of the future from Jesus, given to us as the Book of Revelation. John probably returned to Ephesus during Nerva's reign and then died there during the reign of Trajan, around AD 100.

John provides a powerful example of a lifetime of service to Christ. As a young man, John left his fishing nets to follow the Saviour. For three intense years he watched Jesus live and love, and listened to him teach and preach. John saw Jesus crucified and then risen!

John's life was changed dramatically, from an impetuous, hot-tempered youth, to a loving and wise man of God. Through it all, John remained faithful, so that at the end of his life, he continued to bear strong witness to the truth and power of the gospel.

**Points to ponder:**

- **How strong is your commitment to Christ?**
- **Will it last through the years?** The true test of an athlete is not in the start, but the finish of any race. So too with faithfulness to Christ—**how will you finish that race?**
- **What would you do if you were told to stop teaching/preaching/witnessing about Jesus Christ?**
- **Are you prepared to be banished, imprisoned, or even killed for Jesus Christ?**

The Gospel mentions no author by name, but the evidence (both from textual and historical sources) points to John as the author. Certainly the writer had to be an eyewitness of the events and one of Jesus' close associates.

Irenaeus (AD 120–202) wrote, "Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia". John's authorship of this Gospel was also affirmed by other early church fathers: Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian.

Those who proposed a later writing (middle of the second century) were disproved when the Ryland Papyrus (a fragment of John's Gospel) was discovered and dated from AD 110–125.

**Setting:**

Written between AD 85–90 from Ephesus, after the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) and before John's exile to the island of Patmos The Gospel of John contains no references concerning where it was written. But according to the earliest traditions of the church, John wrote his Gospel from Ephesus.

The church at Ephesus had been founded by Paul on his second missionary journey in AD 52 (Acts 18:19-21). The church grew under the ministry of Apollos, Priscilla (the first reference in the New Testament to a Female Pastor), and Aquila (Acts 18:24-26). Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey and had an incredible ministry there (Acts 19:1–20:1). Later, during his first Roman imprisonment, Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians (about AD 60). That church is described in Revelation 2:1-7. We don't know how old John was when Jesus called him. But


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assuming that John was a little younger than Jesus, John would have been in his eighties when writing this Gospel, quite old for a time when the life expectancy was much shorter. And considering the fact that all the other apostles had died as martyrs, John was indeed the church's elder statesman.

We can imagine him teaching and counselling the Christians in this well-established church, as well as doing some writing.

**Can you imagine the following**:

- Paul has planted this church in Ephesus
- The church grew and prospered under Apollos, Priscilla (woman pastor) and Aquila.
- Paul then returns and then ministers there for some time. Then in prison Paul writes the Epistle to the Church at Ephesus to guide and challenge them. (AD 60)
- After the death of all the other Apostles, including Paul, John is left as the only surviving Apostle and elder Christian statesman. He ministers and teaches at Ephesus for possibly 20 years. Before he is exiled to the Isle of Patmos.
- John is known as the "Jesus is Love" apostle. He was so close to God through the Holy Spirit that it was said that He lay in the Spirit many times, just quietly saying: ***"Jesus is love"***.
- Then after being their pastor for many years, Jesus gives John the spiritual revelation, which is recorded in the Book of Revelation.
- In this book in Rev. 2:1-7 **Jesus condemns the church at Ephesus, because <u>they have lost their first love</u>.**
- Even though the **"Love Apostle"** was teaching them, they still fell away and had to be brought back to a place where Jesus would find them acceptable in the day of Judgement.

- **Lesson:** We cannot take anything for granted. We must continually keep short accounts with God and continually meditate on His word and let the Holy Spirit guide us at all times, so that we become the hands and feet of Jesus, wherever we go – AT ALL TIMES, AND IN ALL SITUATIONS!!!.

**Audience** This Gospel was written to <u>new Christians</u> and <u>searching non-Christians</u>[2]. John does not reveal his audience directly, but several characteristics of the book provide insight into the people he was trying to reach.

1. The Gospel of John differs greatly from the other three Gospels in content and approach. Matthew, Mark, and Luke present much historical data with few explanations or interpretations.
2. John, however, selected key events and took time to explain and apply them. (See, for example, 11:51-52 and 12:37-41.) In addition, John chose to write about a few important, miraculous signs (20:30-31) in order to give a clear picture of the person of Christ.
3. John illustrates the tension between faith and unbelief, and emphasizes the importance of responding to Christ. He states this fact at the very beginning and carries it throughout the book—"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (1:12 NIV).
4. John uses simple vocabulary but chooses special words and loads them with meaning — for example; *word, truth, light, darkness, life, and love.*
5. John repeats four main points:
    - **the true identity of Jesus**,
    - the necessity of **responding to Christ in faith**,
    - **the gift of eternal life**, and
    - **the church's mission to the world**.

[2] **That is why it is good to recommend new believers and those searching to read this book before any others in the Bible.**


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6. John explains his purpose clearly: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31 NIV). These unique characteristics of the book seem to indicate that John was trying to convince people of the truth about Christ. Written almost as an evangelistic tract, John presents the evidence for Jesus as the God-man and the Saviour of the world, and he challenges readers to follow his Lord. ***So we can conclude that John wrote to unbelieving Asian Jews and Gentiles***. But John also wrote to Christians, to help strengthen their faith. John was the last surviving apostle and one of the few still living who had seen Jesus in the flesh. It would be easy for young believers—removed from Christ's life, death, and resurrection by a generation, and surrounded by a hostile government and unbelieving neighbours—to have doubts and second thoughts about their faith.

   Remember, this is the late eighties, after the terrible persecutions by Nero (AD 54–68) and the total destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). The church had flourished under persecution, but believers needed reassurance of the truth of Christianity. John, the venerable eyewitness to all that Jesus had done and faithful follower of his Lord, would give that assurance through his personal account of the gospel story.

**Purpose:**

John gives a clear and straightforward statement of his purpose for writing this book: ***"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God***, and that by believing, you may have life in his name" (20:31 NIV). To achieve this purpose, John shows, throughout the Gospel, that Jesus was in fact, the Christ of God, the prophesied one, and the only source of salvation. **This is the dominant theme of the entire book**. The Gospel of John was written to convince those who had not seen Jesus to believe in him, to help believers deepen their faith, and to convince unbelievers to trust in Jesus Christ, as their Saviour. In addition, John has several other emphases worth noting:

1. John shows that the Jewish leaders were completely wrong in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. John 1:11 makes this clear: "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (NIV). John continues this emphasis throughout the book. Consider, for example, Jesus' discussion with the Jews in 8:33-59. There Jesus calls them "illegitimate children" whose real father is the devil. Then the Jews accuse Jesus of being "demon-possessed." Finally, after Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am!" the Jews pick up stones to kill him—but Jesus escapes their deadly intent. In chapter 9, we find another confrontation with the Pharisees after Jesus heals a man who has been blind since birth. These incidents and many others are found only in the Gospel of John.

2. John shows that Jesus is much greater than John the Baptist. It may be that some followers of John the Baptist were still claiming that he was more important than Jesus. Whatever the reason, John emphasizes the pre-eminence of Christ and John the Baptist's special role in preparing the way for him (see 1:6-8, 15-18, 19-27, 35-38; 3:25-30).

3. John emphasizes the deity and humanity of Jesus. This awesome mystery is expressed in the words of the prologue: "The Word was God, and …the Word became flesh" (John 1:1, 14). Elsewhere in the Gospel, Jesus himself declares that he was one with the Father—even the visible expression of the Father (10:30; 14:9-11). And at the end of the Gospel, Thomas makes the wonderful acclamation to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" (20:28). While emphasizing Jesus' divinity and heavenly origin, John also presented Jesus as a real man. It is possible that he did this to confront a docetic[3] heresy promoting the false notion that Jesus only seemed to be living a human life—that he was not fully human. So John states directly that "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (1:14 NIV).

   John also mentions Jesus' family ties (2:12; 7:3-5), explains how Jesus became tired (4:6), and shows that Jesus really died on the cross (19:33-34). John clearly presents Jesus as the God-man.

4. John shows how people misunderstood Jesus' actions and words. For example, Jesus' listeners misunderstood the identification of his body with the temple (2:18-22), the new birth

[3] **Docetism**: in the early Christian church: This was a heresy that the humanity of Jesus Christ, his sufferings, and his death, were apparent, rather than real. This word originates from the Latin: Docêtae, and from the Greek: Dokêtaim from dokein – to seem.


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(3:3-10), spiritual, living water (4:10-15), spiritual "bread," obedience to God (4:32-34), Jesus' authority (5:31-47), the true bread of life (6:30-36), and the true origin of Jesus (7:25-29). Jesus often explained deeper, spiritual truths by using physical examples. Often, however, his listeners couldn't make the connection; they couldn't get beyond the physical to the spiritual understanding.

5. John describes the work of the Holy Spirit, assuring believers of the presence of the risen Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, Christians have Christ living within them; they don't have to face life alone. John records Jesus teaching that the Spirit would be sent to "convict the world of guilt in regard to sin, and righteousness, and judgment" (16:8 NIV), to guide believers into **ALL TRUTH** (16:13), and to bring glory to Christ (16:14). ***John speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit more than any other Gospel writer.***

6. John reminds believers that unbelief and opposition to God and his plans do not surprise God or thwart his purposes. This includes the betrayal by Judas (foretold by prophets and known by Jesus—6:64; 13:18; Psalm 41:9), the death of Jesus on the cross (a necessary part of God's salvation plan—3:14-18), and the rejection of Christ by unbelievers (1:10-11). Although conflicts are inevitable, God is sovereign and in control, and his goals will be accomplished. Because of John's special purpose for writing this book, he describes many incidents in the life of Christ that are not recorded in the other Gospels. These events include: John the Baptist declaring Jesus to be the Messiah, Jesus turning water into wine, Nicodemus visiting Jesus at night, Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus healing a government official's son, Jesus healing a lame man by the pool, Jesus' brothers ridiculing him, Jesus healing the man who was born blind, Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus teaching about the Holy Spirit, Jesus teaching about the vine and the branches, and Jesus appearing to Thomas and reinstating Peter after his resurrection.

   John, the Son of Thunder turned evangelist, knew that people needed to know about the ***real*** Jesus. He also knew that as a contemporary of Christ and one of the chosen Twelve, he was uniquely suited to tell the story. So, compelled by love and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John wrote the Gospel.

**Message:**

"Jesus Christ, Son of God," "eternal life," "believing," "Holy Spirit," "resurrection"—because John's purpose was to convince people to believe in Christ, it's not surprising that his message follows the themes listed here.

In order to trust Christ, a person must understand Jesus' true identity, the promise of eternal life, the necessity of faith, and the resurrection of Christ. And to live for Christ, a person must understand the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

**Jesus Christ, Son of God (1:1-18; 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-15; 6:5-14; 6:16-21; 9:1-12; 11:1-44; 19:1–20:30).** Because this is a "Gospel," the entire book tells about Jesus. But in relating the life of the Lord, John chose eight "signs" (miracles) that illustrate and prove Jesus' true identity as God's Son.

These chosen signs (seven miracles plus the Resurrection) display Christ's glory and reveal his true nature.

1. Jn. 2:1-11—Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding at Cana. John concludes this story by explaining, "***This, the first of his miraculous signs***, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (NIV). Evidently this miracle was an important turning point for the disciples. They trusted Jesus and began to understand that he was more than just a great teacher.

2. Jn. 4:46-54—Jesus heals the royal official's son. Back in Cana, Jesus encountered a Roman official who asked Jesus to heal his son. In addition to demonstrating Christ's power over sickness, this incident also shows that ***Jesus was the Saviour for all people, not just the Jews***. John states that this was the second miraculous sign (4:54).

3. Jn. 5:1-15—Jesus heals the invalid by the pool at Bethesda. This was a significant miracle because the man had been disabled for thirty-eight years! It was also important because Jesus performed the healing on the Sabbath, incurring the wrath of many Jews. John explains: "For


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this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (5:18 NIV).

4. Jn. 6:5-14—Jesus feeds the five thousand. This miracle had a tremendous effect on the multitudes. "After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world'" (6:14 NIV). Jesus had fed thousands from only five barley loaves and two small fish!

5. Jn. 6:16-21—Jesus walks on water. In this dramatic event, Jesus displayed his power over nature. Seasoned fishermen like John knew the great difficulty of guiding a boat over wind-tossed seas. Yet Jesus encountered no resistance from the sea and defied all they knew about sinking and floating as he strolled across the waves. The sad thing about this miracle is that only Peter had enough faith to step out of the boat onto the water and go to Jesus. **All of the disciples had this opportunity and missed it**. We have to make sure that we never miss an opportunity to be obedient to God's calling on our lives.

6. Jn. 9:1-41—Jesus heals a man blind from birth. Although all the healings recorded by John were wonderful miracles, they increase in dramatic effect and significance throughout the book. First we read about a very sick boy being cured, then a man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. Here we find Jesus restoring sight to a man who had **been *born* blind**—incredible!

7. Jn. 11:1-44—Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. For those impressed by Jesus healing the blind man, John tells of a miracle even more amazing—raising a dead man to life. Surely this was the Son of God! 8. 20:1-29—The greatest sign of all, of course, is the Resurrection. By conquering death, Jesus gave final, definite proof that what he said is true, that he is the Son of God, that our sins can be forgiven, and that we can have eternal life through him. John was an eyewitness—he was one of the first to the empty tomb (20:3-9), and he saw Jesus alive again (20:19-29; 21:1-24). John's readers did not have that privilege, but they too could believe. In fact, as Jesus had told Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (20:29 NIV). In addition to these signs, in every chapter Jesus' deity is revealed. John also underscores Jesus' true identity through the titles he is given—**Word**, **the One and Only, Lamb of God**, **Son of God**, **true bread**, **life**, **resurrection**, **vine**. And the formula is **"I AM."** When Jesus used this phrase, he was affirming his pre-existence and eternal deity. Jesus said, ***"I AM*** the bread of life" (6:35); ***"I AM*** the light of the world" (8:12; 9:5); ***"I AM*** the gate" (10:7); ***"I AM*** the good shepherd" (10:11, 14); ***"I AM*** the resurrection and the life" (11:25); ***"I AM*** the way, **(I AM)** the truth and **(I AM)** the life" (14:6); and ***"I AM*** the true vine" (15:1).

   John shows us that Jesus is unique as God's special Son, yet he is fully God. Because he is fully God, Jesus is able to reveal God to us, clearly and accurately.

***Importance for Today****.*

The person and work of Christ form the core of Christianity and give us our hope for forgiveness and eternal life. John affirms that Jesus is the God-man—that is, he is fully God and fully man. This truth, of course, is impossible for our finite minds to comprehend. John does not try to explain it; he just presents the facts—Jesus, the incarnate Word, living as one of us and dying for us.

Because Jesus is God, he has the nature, ability, and right to offer eternal life. When he died on the cross, he was the perfect sacrifice and only mediator between God and people (14:6).

Because Jesus became a man, he identified fully with us, enduring temptation, persecution, hardship, and suffering. And when he died on the cross, **he *really died****;* he wasn't pretending.

Through the Incarnation, the infinite, holy, and all-powerful God demonstrated his love for us—"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (3:16 NIV). As believers in Christ, we must affirm both sides of his nature and not exclude or diminish one side in favour of the other. Jesus is fully God and fully man.

**Eternal life (3:15-16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39-40; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 58; 8:51; 10:10, 27-30; 11:25-26; 12:25, 49-50; 20:30-31).**


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Jesus came to bring us life, eternal life. This life begins now, on this earth, through faith in Christ. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" ( or in some translations "more abundantly"_ (10:10 NIV).

**Eternal life is not just a promise for the future; believers can have it now!!!**[4] (see 3:36; 5:24; 6:47). The life that Christ offers also continues beyond death, in heaven: "Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (3:16 NIV); "In my Father's house are many rooms[5]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am … I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (14:2-3, 6 NIV). Eternal life is life that does not end, so it has a quantitative meaning. But eternal life also has a qualitative sense, referring to the very life of God himself. John emphasizes both meanings. Because Jesus is God, he lives forever. Before the world began, he lived with God (1:1-2), and he will reign forever with the Father (14:1-4).

In John we see Jesus revealed in power and magnificence even before his resurrection. Obtaining eternal life is not automatic or magic. People aren't saved just because Jesus became a man and died and rose again. Individuals must believe in Jesus; they must trust in him.

John presents Jesus as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (10:11, 15, 17). His death is said to be a saving death—he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29, 36). He is the one who saves us from the penalties of our sins (Romans 3:23)

But his sacrifice is applied only to those who repent and believe (1:12; 2:11; 3:15-16, 18, 36; and many other passages).

***Importance for Today***.

Life on earth is short, and filled with struggles, suffering, and hardships. Of course there are moments of ecstasy and joy, but for many those moments are very few. And because all human beings are mortal, eventually everyone dies. That description is not mere pessimism, but truth. But God offers hope amidst the suffering—eternal life. Through faith in Christ, we have abundant life now and life unending after we die. The assurance of eternal life gives hope, meaning, and purpose as we live each day.

Jesus offers eternal life to us. We are invited to begin living in a personal, eternal relationship with him that begins now. Although we must grow old and die, we can have a new life that lasts forever by trusting Jesus.

**Believing**

**(1:12, 50; 2:11, 23; 3:15-18; 4:39-42, 48-53; 5:24, 47; 6:30, 47, 64; 8:24, 31; 9:38; 10:25-42; 11:25-27; 12:37-46; 14:11-14; 16:9; 17:8, 20; 20:25-30).**

Belief in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God is the central theme of this book and the desired response from all who read it. Knowing that Jesus is the Son of God and that eternal life is available only through him, people must believe in Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

John **chose eight**[6] **signs (miracles) that show the nature of Jesus' power and love** to convince people to believe in Christ. John explains this as he states his purpose: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31 NIV).

John wrote to a sceptical world (just like our world is today). The Jews were looking for their Messiah whom they thought would be a mighty hero, one who would free them from Roman tyranny and restore Israel to her former glory.

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[4] Please read: Living in the Secret Kingdom. Download free of charge at :www.cammbooks.com.au

[5] In the King James translation this is said to be: "In my Father's house there are many mansions." This is a mis-translation, because you cannot have a house inside another house. The NIV is more correct here. The word could also be translated as: "In my Father's house are many places to abide (live, or dwell)."

[6] Wherever "8" is used, it signifies "a new beginning", hence the number for Jesus is "888"


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Jews found it difficult to believe in a gentle rabbi, one who taught love and servant-hood could possibly be their Messiah and their Deliverer.

The religious Jews were especially sceptical of Jesus. After all, he exposed their hypocrisy and called people to a personal relationship with God through him alone (14:6). He ruffled their feathers and he threatened their power base, their wealth and their jobs. He had to go!!!

Greeks, with their history of philosophical dialogue and intellectual acumen, would be naturally sceptical of a man claiming to be God in the flesh. And what about the Romans? With their multitude of gods, they would find it difficult to embrace one who claimed to be the *only* way.

So John presents the evidence and the facts to support the claims of Christ, to convince readers that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

**The first step toward eternal life is to believe the facts about Jesus**. Through the eight signs and other incidents in the life of Christ, John presents these facts, not as statements about Jesus, ***but as scenes of Jesus in action***. He describes the effects on those who witnessed each event. "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world'" (4:39-42 NIV). But having saving faith ("believing") involves much more than mental assent to the truth.

John emphasizes Jesus' strong teaching ***that those who truly believe in Christ turn from their sin, follow him closely, and obey his teachings.***

Jesus told the crowds, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (8:12 NIV), and, "I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death" (8:51 NIV). When the formerly blind man believed, he worshipped Jesus (9:38).

At another time Jesus taught the disciples, "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me" (12:25-26 NIV). The person who puts his or her faith in Christ (believes the facts about him, trusts him, follows close to him, and obeys his commands) is forgiven and gains eternal life.

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (3:18 NIV).

***Importance for Today***.

Believing is active, living, and continuous trust in Jesus as God. When we believe in his life, his words, his death, and his resurrection, we are cleansed from sin and receive power to follow him.

But we must respond to Christ by believing. This believing begins with the facts about Jesus, but it must go deeper, involving total commitment to him. **Do you *truly* believe in Jesus?** Remember, too, that we also live in a world of sceptics. Most people won't believe that something is true simply because we tell them, especially regarding religion. They need to see Jesus in action, to read about his claims and his miracles, and to understand his teachings.

As we explain to relatives, friends, neighbours, and co-workers about how they can have eternal life, we need to present the evidence that Jesus is the Son of God and their only hope.

**Holy Spirit (1:32-34; 3:5; 6:63; 7:39; 14:16-26; 15:26; 16:7, 15).**

The first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John is John the Baptist's explanation that when he baptized Jesus, he saw, *"The Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him"* (1:32 NIV). He adds that Jesus ***will "baptize with the Holy Spirit"*** (1:33 NIV).


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We know, therefore, that Jesus possessed the Spirit. In addition, we read in John's Gospel that a person must be born **"of water and the Spirit"** (3:5 NIV) and that **"the Spirit gives life"** (6:63 NIV).

In other words, when we believe in Christ, the Holy Spirit gives us new birth into the family of God. John also explains that *the Holy Spirit was not fully given to believers until after Christ had been glorified* (7:39).

The main teaching about the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John, however, describes him as the ***Paraclete.*** This Greek word (*parakletos*) is also used to describe Jesus. Its literal meaning is "the one who comes alongside" and can also be translated "counsellor."

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is like Jesus; he comes alongside believers to guide and teach them, working for them and with them. The main works of the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete are these:

1. He would come and abide in the disciples after the departure of Jesus, to teach them, remind them of his words ("But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you"—14:26 NIV), and show them the truth ("But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth"—16:13 NIV). This work of the Holy Spirit is very important in understanding the doctrine of inspiration. In these passages, Jesus is promising his disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them recall what he had taught them and the important incidents in his life. The Holy Spirit would also open their eyes to understand Christ's true identity. This would ensure that their records of Christ's life would be accurate.

2. He would bear witness to Jesus through the disciples before the world ("When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning"—15:26-27 NIV) and will do his convicting work in the hearts of men and women in the world ("Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned"—16:7-11 NIV). All of these actions of the Holy Spirit are parallel to the work of Jesus on earth. Jesus claimed to be the way, the truth, and the life (14:6), and he preached about sin (8:24), righteousness (8:42-47), and judgment (9:39). Jesus taught his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come after he left the earth. The Holy Spirit would then indwell, guide, counsel, and comfort those who follow Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ's presence and power are multiplied in all who believe.

***Importance for Today****.*

God has sent the Holy Spirit into the world to draw people to himself and to work in the lives of believers. As we read and study God's Word, the Holy Spirit will guide us into the truth (16:13), helping us understand about Christ and about God's principles for living. One of our responsibilities as believers is to testify about Christ in the world (15:27), passing on what the Holy Spirit tells us (15:26). As we do this, we can be confident that the Holy Spirit will be working in the lives of men and women, convicting them of their sin and their need to trust Christ as Saviour (16:7-11).

We must know the Holy Spirit to understand all Jesus taught. We can experience Jesus' love and guidance as we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us.

**Resurrection (20:1–21:23).**

The final and greatest sign presented by John of the divinity of Jesus is his resurrection from the dead. Just as Jesus really lived as a man on the earth, he really died on the cross. The witnesses to Jesus' death were many: the Roman soldiers (19:23-24, 32-34), the chief priests and other Jewish religious leaders (19:21), the crowd (19:20), a small collection of his loyal followers (19:25-27), and those who buried him, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus (19:38-42). Jesus was dead, and with his death, all hope seemed to vanish from the disciples.


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Most of them fled and followed from a distance (Matthew 26:56; John 18:15). Peter denied even knowing Jesus (18:15-18, 25-27). They were a disorganized and fearful group (20:19). But Jesus' death was not the end of the story. He arose, triumphant over death.

Mary Magdalene, John, and Peter found the tomb empty (20:1-9). Then Mary Magdalene met the risen Christ face to face (20:10-18). Later, the disciples saw Jesus alive (20:19-29; 21:1-23). The fact of the Resurrection changed the disciples' lives—from fearful men who fled danger to courageous witnesses who took the gospel to every corner of their world, from discouraged and disillusioned followers to hopeful and joyful "Christ-ones" (i.e., "Christians"—ones belonging to Christ). The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is the foundation of the Christian faith.

***Importance for Today.***

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is important for us for several reasons.

1. ***Truth.*** Because Jesus rose from the dead, we know that he is, in fact, the Son of God and that all he taught is true. People choose religions for a variety of reasons (for example, to please parents, to feel good, to advance socially, or to earn their way to heaven); but the most important and basic reason for becoming a Christian is because the gospel is true. Jesus said that he was the truth (14:6), and his resurrection confirmed it!

2. ***Hope.*** Jesus taught that whoever believes in him will have eternal life (3:16-18). Because Jesus is God and truthful, we know that his promise of eternal life is also true. In the face of danger, disease, and death, we can remember the words of Jesus to Martha at Lazarus's tomb: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (11:25-26 NIV). We can hope.

3. ***Presence.*** Jesus is alive, therefore we worship and serve a living Saviour. Jesus promised his followers that he would be with them always (Matthew 28:20). He said that when he left the world, he would send his Spirit to us (16:7). When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and in us.

4. ***Confidence.*** After the Resurrection, the disciples were confident and bold, knowing that with God for them, no one could stand against them (Romans 8:31). *They also knew that they also would rise from the dead.* We can be changed as the disciples were and have the confidence that someday our bodies will be raised to live with Christ forever. The same power that raised Christ to life can give us the ability to follow him each day, because it lives inside of us.

***If Jesus can change John by his encounter with Jesus Christ, then we all can be changed, renewed and set free from our "natural character" and start to put on the "Character of Jesus Christ".***

1. John learned the lessons of love in "***the School of Christ"*** Jn. 13:23, 1 Jn. 2:9-10, 3:14-18, 4:7-11.
2. This change was in John's character, and is recognised by Jesus, as John is entrusted with the responsibility to care for Jesus' mother (Jn. 19:20).
3. In the Epistles of John, John refers to Christian love more than 25 times. As this Gospel was written under the divine inspiration and revelation of the Holy Spirit, God therefore must consider Christian Love very important.


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# DETAILED STUDY OF SEVERAL CHAPTERS

# JOHN CHAPTER 4:

I have chosen this chapter, because over the years I have heard so many incorrect teachings about this chapter, that it is clear that teachers and pastors, who have been brought up in "western theology", clearly do not understand the Jewish culture, or the real reason this chapter is included in the Book of John. We have already identified that John clearly establishes that Jesus is love. So why would Jesus **"have to go to Samaria"** – just to condemn a woman? There is more to this story that meets the eye at first glance.

## THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

Today, I wish to challenge you on the theme of learning from the Scriptures, by understanding some of the traditions of the land and culture at the time that the Word was written - in fact to see the Scriptures through the eyes and ears of the writer.

There have been many teachings about this series of Scriptures, by many learned people over the last 1900 years. In each case, the pastor, or bible teacher, always seems to be able to reveal some previously hidden new truth to the congregation. This is a good thing, because it proves that the Bible is not a dead book, but it is alive, and that God Almighty, through the Holy Spirit, opens up different levels and depths of understanding of His Holy Word, depending upon the levels of their faith, especially to the people who trust in Him completely and follow His commandments.

For the people in Western society today, this story has been told with many different twists to it. Unfortunately, some of them I feel, are incorrect teachings, due to the lack of understanding of the eastern cultures of that time in history.

To really understand the significance of this story, we must know the history, and culture of the area, just like the people of Israel did, at the time of Jesus Christ; otherwise some of the important points can easily be missed.

**For example** : When Isaiah prophesied (many generations before Jesus was born) that Jesus would be taken out and "hung by a tree" he was in fact identifying a new form of torture, because at the time of Isaiah's prophecy, the death sentence was not carried out in this way. This horrific torture was not introduced by the Romans into Israel until several centuries later.

In a similar manner, we can learn a lot about the encounter between Jesus and the "women at the well", recorded in John Chapter 4, if we know the Scriptures, the political and the cultural situations of that period.

Hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans had been long and intense and it started back at the time just after the death of King Solomon - ***some 700 years before the time of Christ.***

King Solomon turned from God's path, by marrying into many foreign tribes and cultures, and allowed his wives to build temples within Israel, to worship their own God's. He caused, (by his own example) the people of the nation of Israel, to be lead away from the rules of obedience from following God Almighty.

Because of the actions of the king, the Lord became angry with Israel and said he would destroy it. But because of the promise He made to David, a small remnant was to be left. Thus the twelve tribes, which were cemented into a nation under the Kingship of David, in unity, were split up.

- The majority favouring the free and idolatrous life, given by the example of King Solomon –
- and a few, who were righteous in their hearts, who decided to follow after the ways of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that is, to follow after the path that the Lord had revealed to the nation through its prophets.

The ten northern tribes, seceded from the nation of Israel, and its capital city of Jerusalem, and formed themselves around a new capital city, **which they called Samaria.** (so the city of Samaria is the home of the 10 rebellious tribes of Israel).


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In biblical writings, these ten tribes are usually referred to as ISRAEL whilst the two remaining southern tribes were referred to as JUDAH. Thus Jesus Christ is known as "the Lion of Judah", because he came from the righteous line of the tribes of the nation of Israel.

In 722 BC the Assyrian army laid siege to Samaria and captured the city. The remainder of the ten tribes, still living in the city were captured, and deported en-masse away to another place into captivity. They were replaced by near eastern captives, from previous battles of the Assyrians, mostly Gentiles and polytheists, (which were people who believed in more than one God). The planted captive peoples adopted the religion of the captive country. By the time of the New Testament, some 700 years later, they believed in and worshipped Yahweh, and acknowledged Moses as the supreme Apostle of God.

They accepted the Torah - which are the first 5 books of the Bible (Genesis - Deuteronomy) as canonical (sacred) Scriptures. They recognized Mt. Gerizim (not Mt. Zion) as the chosen place of God, as mentioned in the Scripture in Deut. 14:23. They believed in and expected the Messiah to come. They believed in and expected a final day of judgement.

So when you compare them to their southern brothers, their beliefs were very close, just like Protestants, Pentecostals, Evangelicals and Catholics today.

**And just like today, we seem to fight with our brothers over some small issues of doctrine, instead of combining our forces and fighting against the evil of our common enemy - satan.**

To make matters even worse, by the time the Romans arrived on the scene in Israel, orthodox Jews occupied the areas, both to the north and to the south of Samaria.

The Samaritans were looked down upon by the orthodox Jews. Their feelings of hatred was so intense against the Samaritans, (the descendants of their rebellious brothers – the 10 tribes) that they would rather travel twice the distance, by going around this area, than to take the short-cut, which saved them 25-30 Kms, which was more than a days' journey in those days.

On the other hand, the Samaritans were not a hospitable people either. They treasured the famous well of Jacob, the direct descendant of Abraham, but left no container at the well, to allow travellers to have a drink, if they needed one. They believed that the water from this well was sacred and for their use only.

The orthodox Jews would not have used the container if it had been left there by the Samaritans anyway, because they believed that if they drank from a jar which had previously been used by one of the Samaritans, they would be defiled and would not be able to go to the synagogue, without first following the laws of purification.[7 days of ritual cleansing]

So now you understand the situation of both sides, at the time that Jesus Christ started out on his journey. **Both sides needed to be taught a lesson!**

In John 4:4 it reads that : "***Jesus must go through Samaria".***

There were two distinct route he could take. The most common one for so called - "righteous Jews" was via the Jordan Valley, which bypassed the area of the Samaritans. As explained above, the orthodox Jews did not like the Samaritans' attitudes, nor their brand of religion and they did not want to associate with them in any form or fashion. They did not even trade with them, if they could avoid doing so.

What do we understand here? Jesus did not "**have to do anything" – except the will of His Father who sent Him to this earth.** Therefore, Jesus **must go to Samaria** because the Father in Heaven has sent Him. There must be an important reason for this.

For Jesus to decide that He **must go through Samaria** must have been of concern to His disciples, and it is possible that certain of His disciples may have raised a question about their proposed route and their safety. We don't know if they did, or what was Jesus' reply, but go through Samaria He did, ***because he had a special purpose to reveal Himself and His identity to the Samaritan people***, who lived near the well of Joseph.

There was a divine reason for Him to go this path. He was a righteous Jew; His disciples would automatically expect that he take the path around Samaria, like all other orthodox Jews.

When Jesus had laid hands on his disciples and sent them out previously, he had told them only to go to their own people, **not to go to the Samaritans,** or to **the Gentiles**.


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But here now was Jesus, taking the short-cut across Samaria, to get back to Galilee. I am sure that the disciples must have been a little puzzled by this decision, but were too shy to ask Jesus directly why He was going this way.

Jesus arrived at the well, which was on the ground deeded to Joseph by Jacob - a very historic place for this encounter to take place. It says that Jesus got tired - (just like us after a long walk in the hot sun) and He sits down near the well alone - for He has sent his disciples off into the village to find food.

He has walked many miles, he is tired, hungry and thirsty, but there is no vessel in which to collect the water from the bottom of the 100 foot well. The well is situated in a field which Jacob purchased near Shechem (Gen: 33:18-19). It was in this field that the bones of Jacob were finally laid to rest, as recounted in Joshua 24.32. **Jacob's well is still there today!**

Jesus - like us, gets tired, hungry and thirsty, but there is no utensil at the well to get any water. Jesus Christ now has two choices open to him:

**Choice 1.**

We have seen that He was able to change the water into wine. We have seen that He was able to calm the seas. All He has to do is order the water to come up out of the well and calm His thirst.

If he had given such and order, the water would have obeyed, because it was the Word issued forth in the beginning, that created the universe, and all matter in the universe must obey the Word of God. But would that use of God's power give glory to His Father in Heaven ? NO !!!

Whenever Jesus Christ used His power on earth, it was **ALWAYS FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S BENEFIT, - NOT HIS OWN**. Therefore the misuse of God's power was not an acceptable option open to Him.[7] "Though He was in the form of God, He humbled Himself to become a man like you and me." Phil 2:6-8)

Jesus needed the woman to come to the well, so that He could show, by His own actions, what we need to do sometimes, that is, let someone else do for us, what we know we could do for ourselves, **so that they (not us) can receive God's blessings.**

So Jesus Christ had to become a humble person and wait for someone to come to the well, who had a container to get the water from deep down inside the well. It is very easy for us to be proud and to give to others. But it really hurts our pride sometimes when we have to be dependent upon others, to receive from them.

**Choice 2.**

The Scripture says : **It is better to Give than to Receive**. Also it says, God will bless a cheerful giver. Consider this in the light of the sentence from the Lord's prayer : "Give us this day, our daily bread". We have to **learn to be a "receiver" of someone else's "giving".**

The most important aspect of this story is that the giving was in response to a direct commandment from the Lord. We have to be always sensitive to the Holy Spirit, so that we are able to :-

- hear the commandments from the Lord;
- respond immediately to that command;
- know that the Lord will honour His word, and that blessings will follow those who are obedient to His commandments.

⇒ **REMEMBER OBEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE.**

We have to learn also to receive gifts that the Lord has commanded others to give TO US, so that they can receive their rightful blessings.

For example :- A pastor is not supposed to receive a salary from his congregation - like any other professional worker. He is, like the Levites of old, dependent upon the congregation and their tithes for his daily bread. The tithes and offerings given by the church are to be available for the pastor to use. He may not use all of it, but the amount decided between the elders and the pastor should never make the difference between whether he accepts the job or not.

[7] Neither is it acceptable for us today to misuse God's power for our glory instead of the glory of God.


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*If a pastor does not take a position because of the salary, then he has turned this job into a profession – not a calling from God, and therefore God cannot bless his ministry.*

An ordained pastor works as God's own servant. God is responsible for providing for him. The more obedient he is to his calling, the more the Lord shall bless him. (Read Luke 6:38 and John 10:11-13) Jesus was practising what He had been preaching to His disciples when he sent them out to witness.

*"Take nothing with you for your journey, neither staves, nor script, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them" (Luke 9:3-6)*

God was about to bless a giver, the person who came to the well, if she gave Jesus water when He asked her for it. ("for whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward (here on earth, as well as in Heaven). (Mark 9:41)

In the eastern cultures, it is a common site very early in the morning, between 6-9 am, to see the man of the house taking his cattle or goats out to the fields, or going to tend to the crops. At the same time, the women go out in the cool of the morning to the wells, to gather water for the rest of the day. There they gossip and pass news from one family to another, in a time of joyful sharing. Sometimes they sing folk songs, or songs of praise, in thanks to God for the well and the water, as they labour in pulling up the rope with the buckets containing 4-5 litres of water each time. These wells could be up to 100 feet deep.

Each family may need up to 40 litres of water per day, which they balance in two pottery containers on their heads as they go back to the village. Thus in some households the women have to make several trips. So it would be uncommon for a lady to be at the well at the middle of the day. There had to be a specific reason for this, so let us now examine the Scripture closely to find out the Divine reason.

The time is about midday (the Jewish sixth hour). A woman comes to the well, carrying her crockery water pots, to draw water and take it back to the house in which she was living.

Some pastor say that the woman who came to the well, had an incurable disease, like Leprosy. Therefore she was an outcast, and that is why she came to the well in the middle of the day. If this was the case, she would not have been allowed to even use the well to get water, because the Samaritans would have considered the water was polluted if she used it, if the woman indeed had leprosy.

Secondly if the woman has leprosy, the Lord would have healed her of her disease and she would have gone back into the village praising the Lord of her healing, a very different story than the one she eventually used.

Other pastors say that the woman was a prostitute, that is why she came to the well in the middle of the day, because she was up late entertaining her clients and did not get up early enough to come to the well, at the usual time with the other women.

If this was the case, she would not have been allowed to even use the well to get water, because the Samaritans would have considered the water was polluted if she used it, if the woman was a prostitute, she would have been considered a sinner, an outcast, and not allowed to use the water from Jacob's well.

If she had been a prostitute, then Jesus would have told her that her sins were forgiven, and to go away and sin no more. ***Throughout all of the Gospels, when Jesus was confronted with sin, he dealt with it, right there, on the spot***. But Jesus did none of these things. !!!

What He did do, crossed across all accepted customs of the times. It was to become a lesson for the whole nation.

At that time, it was forbidden for a Jewish Rabbi to speak to a woman in public. This was later proved by the surprise on the faces of his disciples, when they returned and saw Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman, a complete stranger. (read verse 27)

Because of the belief of being made unclean, if an orthodox Jew shared the same water container as a gentile, or a Samaritan, to ask her for a drink of water was the second custom broken.

Jesus looks carefully at the Samaritan woman. He is looking deep down into her spirit.


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⇒ He disregards her tiredness.

⇒ He disregards the heat of the day and the physical exertion required to draw the water from 100 feet below.

⇒ He also disregards the fact that she is a total stranger and that she is a hated Samaritan.

⇒ Jesus commands her to give him a drink of water.

The custom of that time does not allow for a strange man to speak to a woman in public. To do so brings shame and humiliation on the woman, and she who would run back to the menfolk of her own family and tell them what happened.

They immediately would require an apology from the offending man in question. If they did not get the apology, the man would be severely beaten, in some cases even killed. Only 2 types of women would answer a strange man in public :-

⇒ a prostitute;

⇒ or a prophetess.

We have already ruled out the first of these two, (the prostitute), so let us examine the possibility of the second.(a prophetess)

(John 4:9) The Samaritan woman replies to the command of Jesus. *"How is it that thou, being a Jew asks drink from me, which am a woman of Samaria? (YOU KNOW THAT) the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans".*

Her response ignores that he "commanded" her to give him a drink of water; instead she replaces the word "command" with a milder, more acceptable word "request" [ask].

At this moment she is not ready to accept that Jesus is indeed also a prophet. The Samaritan woman is standing (unawares) before the Lord of Glory. But she, in her own flesh and understanding, is changing the command of Jesus into a request. We are often guilty of the same sort of things. (changing the commandments of the Lord, into small requests, which better suit our levels of faith or levels of understanding).

Jesus could have revealed His identity to her immediately. He could have said "I am the Son of God, the one you have been waiting for". But Jesus likes people to learn things for themselves. He is never forceful. She has encountered a prophet (Jesus Christ) unawares. The way she asks her question to Jesus reveals that she is a prophetess among her own people.

Jesus now wants to start to stir up her faith. He wants to let her recognize Him for who He really is. (verse 10) [Amplified version]

" If you only knew what a wonderful gift God has for you, and who **I AM**, you would ask me for some living water. Again Jesus could have revealed who He was, but again the woman misses the point of what He said, or is not yet ready to believe her good fortune.

So the woman continues to question Him in the ways of a prophet. Notice she is not ashamed, to be talking to this complete stranger, she is in fact setting up a deeply religious dialogue with Him.

"But you don't have a rope or a bucket, and this is a very deep well. Where would you get this living water? Besides, ***are you greater than our ancestor Jacob*** ? How can you offer better water than this which he and his sons and their cattle enjoyed ?"

She recognizes that Jesus was indeed talking in parables, as do many prophets, but still she could not believe what He was saying to her. "If you knew the gift of God ....." Jesus Christ Himself is the gift of God.


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This woman has had terrible tragedy throughout her life, she has lost 5 husbands. As divorce was very rare in those days, all of them probably died. This woman is used to bad news, to terrible tragedy.

She is starting to suspect that maybe the man standing before her is the Messiah. To think that she has found the Messiah, is such wonderful news that her mind refuses to believe it, to comprehend it. Her spirit starts to believe, but she is scared in her mind, to accept the complete truth of what she now perceives that Jesus is really saying to her **"I AM, the living water",** so she flees from the spiritual realm of a prophetess, back into the physical realm of an ordinary woman. "Sir please give me this water that I thirst not, neither come here to draw any more water."

NOTE : [Many times in the Scriptures, Jesus will meet with a person in the spiritual realm at their level of faith.]

1. In the case of Zachariah, the angel Gabriel delivered the Lord's message. In the mind of Zachariah was doubt, so a second sign (as proof from the Lord was necessary). He was made deaf and dumb until the birth of his promised son, John the Baptist took place.
2. In the case of Mary, she accepted with humility the news given by the angel and it came to pass without any problems, or further confirmation necessary.

Jesus does not try to force her mind to understand, and to come into line with what her spirit already perceives to be correct. Instead, Jesus gives her a chance to flee from Him (in the physical realm, that she has now returned to).

Jesus, using the gift of the Word of Wisdom, already knows that this lady is a widow, that she has no husband, so he says to her : **"Go, call your husband and come back here."**

Now if she wants to flee, here is her opportunity. The important thing is not that she answered Jesus, it is that she remained, to further question him and find out more.

Her spirit is now trusting in the truth and it is awakening her mind also to this same truth. She has decided to overcome her fears and find out for sure the revelations to be revealed to her, both good, or bad.

Real faith is a matter of what we do, not what we say or think. (James 2:18). Jesus told us to be doers of His Word, not hearers only.

Now her faith is starting to come into action. Instead of leaving, she answers Jesus with the truth. "I do not have a husband". "Jesus said unto her, ***Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that thou hast said truly."*** Jesus now reveals to her that he can see into her life. He now reveals to her that he is a real prophet.

Many people have misinterpreted the answer of Jesus, because they do not understand the culture or the customs of the times. They thought that Jesus was accusing her of being a wicked woman, but this was not the case.

The Old Testament law (Deut. 25:5) required that a widow's brother-in-law succeed her husband, if she was childless, so as to guarantee an heir.

This is clearly shown in the example of the widow Ruth. Boaz could not marry her, until the first relative - the brother-in-law Elimelech, refused to fulfil his obligations under the law.

In truth, the woman at the well did indeed have five husbands and each of them had died. The sixth relative has taken her into his household in accordance with the Old Testament law, where she will be closely guarded and chaperoned by many of their relatives, until a new marriage could be arranged.

There was also a requirement not to allow a widow to marry for a period of 1 year after the death of her husband, just in case she was pregnant when he died, as this child would carry the inheritance of that family, not the new husband.

1. If a woman was not married, or lost a husband, she was thought to be cursed of God refer to (Is. 4:1).
2. If she subsequently re-married and lost a second husband, she was considered doubly cursed.
3. However, if she lost a third, fourth and fifth husband, the people began to realize that the Lord was preparing her for the high office of service to her people - as a prophetess.


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A prophetess could talk to men, or women in public. Everybody came to them for counsel. They were God's chosen servants, a different set of rules applied. There was no shame for a stranger to talk to a prophetess in public, nor for a man or woman of the village to enquire of her, the Lord's will for their lives.

The answer that Jesus gave back to the woman at the well, bore no reproach. It bore no condemnation whatsoever. Jesus did not accuse this woman of any sinful act !!! In fact, it revealed to her that Jesus already knew who she was, that he acknowledged her as a prophetess.

Jesus already knew of her suffering, her inner pains, but also He knew of the work she had done for the Lord since she became a prophetess. Now Jesus has given her 2 signs:

a) His direct command for a drink of water;

b) His revelation about her life;

But Jesus wants to reveal more to her. Again she is reluctant to accept the reality of the truth that Jesus has revealed to her, and asks of him a direct question.

(Verse 20) *"Our fathers worshipped in the mountain, and you (a Jew) say Jerusalem is the place we should worship."* She is challenging Jesus (as a prophet) to solve this spiritual question.

Jesus must use the limit of faith she has to reveal to her the real situation. Jesus has to use whatever faith level the person has, as ground upon which to build. This is the only way to meet a person at their level of faith !!!

Jesus starts from this point and then builds upon it. Paul explained this in (1. Cor. 9:19:22) You must be prepared to be at different levels for all men, so that you can win their souls.

(Verse 23) *"A time will come, however, **indeed it is already here**, when the true (genuine) worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: (not at Jerusalem, nor in this mountain), for the Father is seeking just such people as these as his (true) worshippers"*

By giving the woman at the well this new revelation about the Scriptures, Jesus is indeed revealing to her that He is more than a Prophet. (but can she accept this?) **HIS HOLY PRESENCE IS ALREADY FLOODING OVER HER SPIRIT.**

Gone from her now is any thought of fleeing from His presence. She suspects that He is the Messiah, but she will not come out with the question directly - as a prophetess should, but reverts to the polite indirect ways of the eastern culture.

(Verse 25) *"I know that the Messiah cometh, which is called the Christ: when He is come He will tell us all things".* She confirms her faith in the promises of the Prophets.

Jesus has come as the Messiah, but more than the Messiah. He has come as the Son of God. The Jewish community did not recognize Him as this, even though the prophets of old had proclaimed it as such. Jesus now gives her the third and this time a MAJOR SIGN.

(verse 26) Jesus said to her: *"I that am speaking to you now am He"* Jesus has revealed Himself to her in all His Glory. The Holy Spirit quickly confirms this to her.

When the disciples return (verse 27) they are amazed to see Jesus speaking to a woman in public. But they do not question the woman, nor do they ask Jesus the reason for this. This is another clear sign to her of his position and authority over the disciples.

This same situation must exist in the world today. People must see (by our examples as Christians) that the Lord is indeed in authority over us.

She is now so excited, she cannot keep this news to herself, she must share it with the whole village. She confirms her belief to Jesus, by leaving her water pot at the well and running off to spread the news in the village.

To the eastern culture, water is sacred. It is a sign of life. A water pot was a treasured possession. If one was broken, tragedy struck a household. The pieces were not thrown away. The larger pieces were used as serving bowls or dishes. The fact that she left her water pot at the well is a very significant sign to Jesus.


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It means that she believes and that she will return, to claim her reward. She quickly goes off to the village to tell them the good news.

But as a prophetess again, she does not force this revelation upon them. She must draw them to the well, and let the Holy Spirit reveal the truth to each of them individually.

When she goes back into the town she tells the people to go to the well. *"for there they will find a man which told her all about her life."*

If she was not a respected person in the village, the people would have ignored her. They would not have gone out to meet Jesus. The fact that she was recognized by the people of the village as a prophetess, placed more weight on her words, when she revealed to them, that there was one who knew the complete life of their prophetess. Indeed he must be a great prophet indeed.

They went because she was their prophetess. They believed because Jesus awakened their own individual faith to the spiritual truth of who He really was. This is why the villages replied to the prophetess later, after Jesus had stayed with them for 2 days.

(Verse 42) *"And they told the woman: Now we no longer believe (trust, have faith) just because of what you said; for we have heard Him ourselves - personally; and we know (without any doubt) that He truly is the Saviour of the world. the Christ."*

**Conclusion:**

Jesus said that in days of old (in the Old Testament) you were to love your neighbours and hate your enemies – but I tell you a better way – love your enemies also. The story of the woman at the well is a clear example of Jesus practising what He preached. It was a lesson that the disciples never forgot.

The story of the woman at the well is also a story of faith. It is a story that we should all carefully examine and learn from, because it could happen to anyone of us, at anytime.

A person, a complete stranger, could talk to you in the street, and he/she could have a message from God for you. Learn to listen carefully to what other people have to say. Don't be impatient with them, because it may be an opportunity lost for you forever.

In this case not only would the prophetess not have received the revelation about who the stranger (Jesus Christ) really was - but the whole village would also have lost their subsequent blessings.

In view of this, your actions can sometimes have drastic effects on others around you. Please consider this in the future.


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# JOHN CHAPTER 11 - STEPS OF FAITH

We have heard many sermons about faith and how people in the Old Testament were referred to in Hebrews chapter 11 as "men of faith".

**But what is faith?**

**I believe the definition of faith is this:**

**F = Forsaking**
**A = All**
**I = I**
**T = Trust**
**H = Him**

**What are the steps of faith?**

**Let us carefully look at each of these one at a time.**

1. **Forsaking all**, means to cast aside all our lifelines, our anchors, our security blankets and all our mind's knowledge, and put our trust completely on Jesus Christ and His Word.

**This is first step**. This is a step in our minds, but it is still the first step of faith.

Now this first step must be transferred from our minds to the spirit part of man. There are many cases where people came to hear Jesus but when push came to shove, they were not prepared to take this next step.

The scriptures recounts that the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked Him a question, as recounted in Matthew 19:16-24.

***16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, "Good" Master, what "good" thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?***
***17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.***
***18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,***
***19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.***
***20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?***
***21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.***
***22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.***
***23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.***


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***24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.***

***25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?***

***26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, <u>With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.</u>[8]***

There is some interesting things to be identified in this short passage of scripture.

1. Firstly, the rich young ruler recognises that Jesus is a "good" man and addresses Him with respect.
2. He then asks Jesus: "What **"good"** things must I do to gain eternal life"?
    a. The young man recognises that bad things cannot get you into heaven, so he asks what "good" thing will get him into heaven?
    b. He was assuming that it is by works one enters into heaven. Of course all of us know that this is not the case.
3. Jesus first asks Him why he called Jesus "good"; but Jesus did not let him give an answer. In true traditional rabbinical style, Jesus replied with a statement which required and answer from the ruler.
    a. Jesus replied that only God can be called "Good".
    b. Jesus then explained that he must keep the commandments.
4. The ruler replied that he had kept all the commandments that Jesus had identified, since he was a very young boy.
5. Notice that Jesus does not say to him that he is lying, no, ***Jesus challenges him to do a better thing that this***, to sell all that he has and give it to the poor and follow after Jesus as one of His disciples.
    a. This young man believed God's word and had been following and obeying it, but the "Logos of the Word[9]" – doing it to the "letter of the law".

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[8] **You cannot quote the last part of this scripture, without first understanding the question and the response which puts this response from Jesus into context. The first part of this scripture says about man and the last part about God, because the last part does not stand alone as true.**

[9] **Logos:** λόγος ("word")

This Greek word has a long history, and conveys different meanings in Greek philosophy, in Jewish theology and in early Christianity. In Greek philosophy, Logos means either the order of the universe, or the divine reason as the organizing force of the cosmos. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Bible, Logos renders the Hebrew *davar,* the Word of God, whereas the 1st century Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria develops an entire theology of the Logos in his allegorical commentaries on scripture. In Christianity, finally, Logos becomes the name for the second person of the Trinity incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth. In the 5th century B.C. the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus, reacting against the materialism of the Ionian philosophers, introduced the Logos idea. The visible world is a symbolic system, which conceals and reveals the reality. This reality is the divine soul of the world whose life is manifested in the endless cycle of the cosmos with its changes and renewals. There is one Logos in the world, which can be seen as its imminent reason. For the Stoics, the Logos is responsible for fashioning things. He is God himself, as the organic principle of the cosmic process, which he directs to a rational and a moral end. Only man participates in it so fully that he may be regarded as an


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b. Jesus was now challenging him ***to do one further step*** – to sell everything and follow Him.

c. This was a step of faith that the rich young ruler was not prepared to take. He was not prepared to do the "Rhema of the word"- the spirit part of the word.

**d.** He was not prepared to step out of his security zone and put his faith in Jesus Christ. He was not prepared to follow the **"love of the word".**

e. Unfortunately, there are many in the church today, who are in the same boat as this rich young ruler. They want to know the word, be able to sprout it out like a parrot, but are unable to go the next step and put it into practise.

6. To be a true follower of Jesus Christ there is a cost. It may be a financial cost; it maybe that you have to give up your secular career to "do the work of the ministry". It maybe that God wants you just to learn to trust Him in all areas of your life, so that you can be the very best witness for Him, wherever you work, or play.

***7.*** Whatever it is that God has called you to do, there will be a cost. But praise God, ***the rewards always outweigh the costs.***

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effluence of the deity. Since the one Logos is present in many human souls, men may have communion with each other through their participation in the same Logos. In the OT the Word of God – *Davar* in Hebrew; *Logos* in Greek – is connected with creation, providence, and revelation. It is the instrument that controls the cosmos (Ps 107:20; 147:18). God spoke and the world was created. His Spirit gives life to what the Logos creates. The Word of God also inspires prophecy and imparts the Law. Philo of Alexandria blends Greek and Jewish ideas about the Logos and achieves a syncretism of divergent Greek conceptions. He believes in the Logos as revealed in the Bible, but he wishes to present the divine activity to the Hellenistic mind. The Logos he depicts is an intermediary between God and the world. Among the many titles he gives to the Logos, is the firstborn Son of God, the first of the angels, the image of God. Logos is sometimes called Wisdom. In other passages Wisdom is considered as the mother of Logos. In the mind of God Logos is going out of itself in creation. It represents the world before God as High Priest, Intercessor, and Paraclete. In the NT, the Gospel of John applies the title Logos to Jesus (c.f. John 1:1); but Paul also knows the whole doctrine of the Logos which he expresses in his letter to the Colossians. The influence of Philo on the author of the fourth gospel, hitherto accepted by many scholars, has been questioned lately. If there are similarities between Philo and John, there are also many differences. Philo never thought of identifying the Logos with the messiah as John did. Moreover John clearly defines the relation of the Logos to God as the second person of the Trinity, distinct though eternally inseparable from the Father. In John's gospel the concept of Logos is more dynamic than in Philo. Christ as the Logos is the complete Revelation of God. Finally the main difference between Philo and John remains the idea of the incarnation of the Logos, in order that mankind might see his Glory.

**Rhema**: The Greek noun ῥῆμα "saying, utterance, verb, word" is analyzed as consisting of the root ἐρ-/ῥε- (er-/rhe-) "say" (confer εἴρω "I say"; ἐρῶ "I will say") and the suffix -μα (-ma), a suffix used to form nouns from verbs. (However, according to a falsified but popular folk etymology, ῥῆμα is derived from the verb ῥέω "I flow".) In the New Testament, this noun is used in such instances as the following: "τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα Κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα" "the Lord's utterance/saying remains forever" (1 Peter 1:25). Rhema "saying" in this context bears a different meaning than Logos "word".


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This series of scriptures were spoken by Jesus for two totally different reasons:

The first was to answer the rich young ruler's questions, and the second was to try to teach His disciples the importance of service to others, being more important than the observance of the letter of the Law.

In another series of scriptures, Jesus follows the same technique, but goes even further.

In the Book of John, chapter 11, we have the story of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

This family lived in Bethany in Judea, just 7 miles outside of Jerusalem and a place Jesus loved to go and to rest and relax in their house.

Lazarus become sick and Mary & Martha sent Jesus a message saying that his good friend is ill, please come.

Why did Mary & Martha send Jesus a message to come?

1. Because both Mary and Martha knew who Jesus was, they had seen Him perform miracles before, healing the sick, making the blind to see and casting demons out of affected people. They both knew in their minds and in their spirits, that Jesus could heal Lazarus, if He just got the message that Lazarus was sick.
2. Like the centurion, they believed that Jesus did not even have to come to their house to heal Lazarus, all He had to do was issue the command, and Lazarus would be healed.
3. Both of these people were at faith level 3.
    a. They knew who Jesus was,
    b. The believed He could heal the sick
    c. They believed He could heal the sick by just saying that Lazarus was healed, even from a distance away.

Upon hearing this news about Lazarus, I am sure that the disciples would have expected Jesus to leave immediately and proceed to Bethany to see Lazarus and heal him of his illness; but Jesus makes no attempt to leave.

The disciples would have assumed that this was because earlier that month people had tried to kill Him in Judea. The disciples even remind Jesus that people had tried to kill Him in Judea and suggested that He not go back there.


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Again, we see that His disciples were looking at things in the secular realm, seeing things as the mind sees them, not letting their thoughts be directed into the spiritual realm, where God works and where the victory takes place.

Remember, the spiritual realm controls the physical realm – not the other way around.

Jesus upon hearing the news about Lazarus being sick makes a statement which must have completely confused His disciples.

Jesus states in verse John chapter 11:4: **"The purpose of his illness is not death, but for the glory of God. I, the Son of God, will receive glory from this situation."**

From this information, the disciples may have been re-assured that Lazarus was sick, but he was not going to die.

Finally, after two days, Jesus says to His disciples: "Let's go to Judea". At this time, Jesus was not even in the same province, where Lazarus was living, but elsewhere; but already Jesus knew the outcome and that this outcome would bring glory and honour to God.

Jesus, knew by the Gift of Revelation Knowledge, that Lazarus was already dead.

In verse 11 Jesus informs the disciples that Lazarus is sleeping. This again confirms to the Disciples that Lazarus is getting better. They reply encouraged: Great! he is sleeping, he will recover. They have completely misunderstood the situation.

Jesus then tells them clearly in verse 14 that Lazarus was dead.

Now the disciples are completely confused – even at the secular level.

1. First they get the message that Lazarus is sick,
2. Then Jesus tells them: "The purpose of his illness is not death.
3. Then Jesus tells them Lazarus is sleeping, meaning that he is getting better, but now,
4. Lazarus is dead.

In the secular realm that does not seem to make sense, but they forgot the second part of Jesus' statement: "**but for the glory of God. I, the Son of God, will receive glory from this situation."**

This situation will only make sense in the spiritual realm, because that is where the victory is.

Verse 14: "And for your sake, I am glad I was not there, for this will give you another opportunity to believe in Me. Come let us go to him."

Jesus delayed His departure so that He could give His disciples an opportunity to increase their faith – to go to another higher spiritual faith level.


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If He had gone earlier He would have healed Lazarus and neither Mary, Martha, or the disciples would not have learnt anything new. They would have stayed at the same faith level.

**From this situation we have to learn that sometimes when God delays, it is to prepare us to move to:**

**a) the next level of testing,**

**b) the next level of maturity,**

**c) or the next level of faith.**

Upon hearing of the death of Lazarus, many of the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem had come down to Bethany to pay their respects to the family and to console Mary and Martha.

All of these people were operating purely in the physical realm, and therefore there could not be a victorious outcome.

When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived in the village she went out to meet Jesus. Martha greets Jesus with respect, but chides Him also.

***"Sir, if You have been here, my brother would not have died."***

In this statement of faith, Martha declares that she believes that Jesus could have healed Lazarus from his illness and made him well.

This is a step 3 level of faith, the same level of faith she had when she sent the message to Jesus that Lazarus was ill.

But now look what happens: Martha moves up a faith level to level 4. She declares: ***"And even now its not too late, for I know that God will bring my brother back to life again, if You (Jesus) will only ask Him to".***

She is stating her case at a new level of faith – but this is in the mind – not in her spirit?

Why do I say this? Because when Jesus confirms her statement that Lazarus will be raised back to life, **(now)** she declares that this will happen on the Day of Resurrection, **(not now)**.

*She did not have the faith (in her spirit) to believe that Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead right now.*

It is one thing to have a high faith level in the mind, but it more important to have a high faith level in the spirit, because it is the spirit of God dwelling within us which gives us the power. It is our faith level in the spiritual realm which activates that power.

Jesus declares to Martha that He is the resurrection and the life, anyone who believes in Him, ***<u>even if he is dead</u>***, yet shall he live. He is given eternal life for believing in Me and shall not perish.


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We quote this now (after the cross) and think nothing about this, but remember this incident is **before the cross** and Jesus was being prophetic, not only about Lazarus, but about Himself as well.

Jesus knew in His heart that He could raise Lazarus from the dead, because He had already done it twice before.

Jesus also knew that when the time came He would be able to raise Himself from the dead also.

Then Jesus asks Martha does she believe this? Her reply is one we should all be able to confess: ***"I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one we have so long awaited".***

Elsewhere in scripture it states: If you believe in your heart (your spirit and not your mind) that Jesus is the Son of God, and confess it with your mouth, you shall be saved. Here we see Martha confirming her salvation faith.

Martha left Jesus, just outside the village and went back into her house to speak to Mary, to tell her that Jesus had come and wanted to see her.

When the Jewish leaders who had come to console Mary & Martha saw here leave rapidly, they thought she was off to the grave to mourn the loss of her brother, so they followed her, but they came face to face with Jesus instead.

Like Martha, Mary's first words were to chide Jesus, but also to confess her faith, that she believed that if Jesus had come earlier, He could have healed Lazarus of his sickness and he would not have died.

Here again, we see Mary at faith level 3.

When Jesus saw Mary weeping (in true grief) and the Jewish leaders wailing with her (in false grief) He was moved with indignation and deeply troubled.

Why was He moved with indignation? In Jewish and eastern culture it is traditional for the family to have professional wailers present at the ceremonies, "to give the impression of grief."

I believe that Jesus perceived through the Gift of Discernment that the Jewish leader's grief was not genuine and as such they were hypocrites "as they were being seen to console" Martha and Mary.

They were acting out to get a reward from those around them, without any thought of the spiritual consequences.

Jesus then asks: Where is he buried? Now comes the shortest scripture in the Bible: **"Jesus wept".** But the question is this: For what reason was He weeping?


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1. Was it because of His love for Mary & Martha and His friend Lazarus who has just died? Or
2. Was it because of the lack of faith of these two sisters, who believed who He was, who believed He could heal Lazarus, but who did not believe that he could raise him from the dead - now? Or
3. Was it because of the lack of faith and understanding of His disciples, who also did not understand why Lazarus had to die? Or
4. Was it because of the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders, who should have known who He was, and been expecting a miracle when He arrived.

As they were moving towards the tomb the leaders were discussing the situation, as if Jesus was not even present.

1. Some said He was weeping because Lazarus was a great friend of Jesus.
2. Others were criticising Jesus: V37-38: He healed the blind man, why didn't He keep Lazarus from dying?

From these two comments above, we see that none of the Jewish leaders had any idea of the majesty and the power that Jesus was about to display.

Even they acknowledged that Jesus could heal a blind man, but they wondered why He allowed Lazarus to die. It did not fit with their spiritual concept of who they thought Jesus was.

Because they were the Jewish leaders, the people charged with the responsibility for leading the Jewish people into the presence of God Almighty, their lack of faith and lack of understanding, causes Jesus to be moved with deep anger – because of their unbelief.

He then moved to the tomb. Jesus commands them to roll the stone aside, because He has already determined what He must do, as recorded in verse 4, so that the Son of God maybe gloried.

Even though Martha had said that she believed that God would do anything that Jesus asked for, she was more worried about the smell of death, than the victory and miracle of life.

Jesus has to remind her of what He had told her outside the village. *"Didn't I tell you that you will see a wonderful miracle from God if you only believe?*

Verse 41: … Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said: "Father, thank You for hearing Me (You always hear Me but I said it so that these people gathered hear may Hear and know that You have sent Me".)

Notice nowhere in any of the Gospels reporting this event, do the writers indicate that Jesus prayed to His Father for this miracle to occur.


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No, all it says that He knew that Lazarus must die so that the Son of God could be glorified.

We can only assume that Jesus communed with His Father in the Spirit and this spiritual communication laid the plan and sequence of events which must take place so that the outcome of Lazarus being raised from the dead could come to pass, to give witness to Mary, Martha and all the disciples, as well all the Jewish leaders who were gathered at the entrance of the tomb.

Now Jesus commands Lazarus to come forth!!!

Jesus was given "faith without limits". He knew, beyond all reasonable doubt that when He gave this command Lazarus would indeed come forth, wrapped in his burial clothes. **And Lazarus came forth being still wrapped in his burial clothes.**

Jesus commanded the people gathered there to unwrap him of his burial clothes. Why did Jesus tell the people to do this?

His spirit was alive, but his body was still wrapped for death. Both parts must be freed from death before a person can once again operate and dwell upon this earth.

Many people today, believe in their hearts, believe in their spirits, but their actions are handcuffed, because their physical beings are still under the earthly forces.

The scripture tells us that we have to die to self. More of Jesus and less of us. When we consciously do this, there is a revelation and a revolution taking place in our lives. This allows the spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the grave to not only dwell in us, but to operate in us and through us into the wider community at large.

So the challenge today is this:

1. Do you know who Jesus is?
2. Do you believe that through His blood you are redeemed to eternal life with Him?
3. Do you believe that the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead dwells in you?
4. Do you believe that Jesus has called each of us by name as stated by Apostle Paul in Romans 8:28b?
5. If so, what have you as an individual been called by God to do?
6. Have you stepped out in your spiritual faith and activated God's plan in your life?
7. Is there evidence that your plan has been activated, by the physical evidence of signs and wonders following you?


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The scripture says in John 15:16 that it is by our fruits that we shall be known. So the challenge today is show me your fruit, to prove that you are in obedience to God's calling on your life. **These are the Steps of Faith.**

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# JOHN CHAPTER 17: THE PRAYER OF JESUS

In Luke chapter 11 we have what is called: ***"The Lord's Prayer",*** which is in fact a misnomer, because Jesus was replying to a question asked by the disciples. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them **"how to pray",** as John the Baptist also taught his disciples.

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

We, as Christians, attribute this prayer to Jesus, but if you examine the text of this "prayer" in the Scriptures, you will see that the Disciples asks Jesus to teach us ***(how) "to pray".*** **It is more correct to call this "The disciples' prayer", because they asked for it.** In this case they would have used the Jewish word **(Halakah) - "how to" – in fact they were asking Jesus to shown them "the technique of praying"**

"Our Father, which art in Heaven" is the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, but surprisingly enough the "Lord's Prayer" is very similar to extracts from pieces of many Jewish prayers - all of which the disciples would have been familiar with and been able to recite off by heart.

Jesus used the Rabbinical form of teaching, to indicate the process of "how to" pray. For example: In the Old & New Testament there are many references to the Law being given to Moses.

That was all that was needed for the Jews to know that the person speaking was referring to the 10 Commandments and later the 613 Levitical laws.

Even today we use the same concept when we say: It says in John 3:16 … We assume that the people know this scripture, so we don't expand it any further. Similarly when we talk about sin we say Romans 3:23 and assume that the people listening know that particular scripture.


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Let us examine the contents of the Lord's prayer carefully and see where it originates from :-

| THE LORD'S PRAYER | Jewish Writings |
|---|---|
| Our Father, which art in heaven" | "Our Father in Heaven"<br>**(Talmud, Joma. 76a.)** |
| "Hallowed be the name" | Extolled and hallowed be His great name"<br>**(Kaddish Prayer)** |
| "Thy Kingdom come" | "His Kingdom come, His salvation spring forth, His Messiah come".<br>**(Kaddish Prayer)** |
| "Thy will be done on earth, as it is (already being done) in heaven" | "Do His will as if it were your own".<br>**(Talmud : Sayings of the Fathers 2:4.)** |
| Give us this day our daily bread" | **Rabbi Simon Ben Yochai was asked by his disciples : "Why did the manna not come down from heaven once a year - for the whole year ?"**<br>**He replied :- "This thing may be compared to a king of flesh and blood, who had one son, whom he gave his allowance once a year, so that he would visit his father once a year only. Thereupon he gave him his allowance every day, so that he called on his father every day.** The same with Israel. **One who had four or five children would worry saying: Perhaps no manna will come down tomorrow, and all will die of hunger. Thus the Israelites had to turn their attention to their Father in Heaven. (daily to ensure that they received His bountiful supply of food).**<br>**Talmud. Joma 76 a.** |
| "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"<br>**(see also Matt. 5:23-24, Matt. 18:21-35)** | "Raba says: He who does not exercise his right to punish his fellowman, is forgiven all his iniquities."<br>**Talmud Rosh ha-Shana 17a** |
| "And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil" | "Do not lead me to sin, temptation and shameful behaviour ... Deliver me from the evil inclination."<br>**(Night Prayer)**<br>"Lord our God, God of our Fathers, be it thy will to deliver us this day and every day from ... an evil man, from evil desire, from an evil friend, from an evil neighbour, from ill hap, from the evil eye and from an evil tongue."<br>**(Morning Prayer)** |
| "For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory for ever" | "For thine is the Kingdom and thou shalt reign in glory for ever."<br>**(Morning Prayer)** |

**QUESTIONS:**

1. When the disciples asked Jesus "to pray" what were they really asking Him?
2. What was the Jewish word they would have used?
3. What form of teaching was Jesus using at this time?
4. Give examples of this type of teaching, both from the Old testament and from the New Testament.
5. From the prayers that Jesus referred to, what do we know about the way we pray?
6. What types of things should we pray for?


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7. What types of things should we not pray for?

However, in John chapter 17, we really do have a Prayer that we can call the Lord's prayer, because the whole chapter is a prayer.

| **John Chapter 17, Verse** | **Comments** |
|---|---|
| V1. Jesus spoke these things, and then he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said: O my Father, the hour has come: glorify thy Son, so that thy Son may glorify thee. | In this verse Jesus asks that the Father do something, [glorify thy Son] so that Jesus can do something in return. |
| V2. As thou has given Him power over flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou has given to Him | Jesus is proclaiming to His Father that the power and authority to give eternal life to all flesh that has been given to Him. |
| V3. And this is eternal life, that they may know thee (You, My Father), the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent | Jesus' definition of eternal life is: ***that we know the Father*, the one and only true God,** not that we live in Heaven with Jesus forever.<br><br>**Therefore,** as we become more like Jesus, we need to take on His definitions of eternal life as well. |
| V4. I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do | Surprise, Surprise!!!<br><br>Jesus finished the work His Father gave Him **BEFORE THE CROSS: NOT ON THE CROSS, OR IN HIS RESURRECTION.**<br><br>Ref: v1, Jesus now wants His Father to do some work: to glorify the Son.<br><br>The work of the cross and the resurrection were ***the work of the Father, through the Son, so that the Son maybe glorified before all of heaven, the angels, principalities and powers and mankind.***<br><br>This is so that all will know that ***"all power and all authority has been given unto Him for all eternity".*** |
| V5. And now O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. | Jesus request His Father, [**before the cross]** to glorify Jesus with the glory (of the Father) which He had had before creation began.<br><br>Ref: Eph. 2:6-11 |
| V6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest Me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them Me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to Me; and they have kept thy word. | ➢ I have revealed Your name unto the disciples that You gave to Me. [*That was part of the work that the Father gave to Jesus]*<br><br>➢ That You selected - out of all of the men of Israel – Your chosen people<br><br>➢ They belonged to You & You gave them to Me and they have kept Your Word. |


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| | |
|---|---|
| V7. Now they have known all things whatsoever thou hast given Me are of thee | ➢ They now have the revelation that all the things I have been able to do here on earth are from You. |
| V8. For I have given unto them the words which thou has given unto Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they believe that thou has sent Me. | ➢ Jesus confirms to the Father that He has spoken all the Words from the Father to His disciples, ***[but more importantly]*** **THEY HAVE RECEIVED THEM!!!** [They may not yet understand them – but they have received them.] That is why it is so important to "believe God's word", even when we don't understand it – because God has promised that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth [reveal to us all truth – when we need to understand it!!]<br>➢ They have the revelation that I came out from you (through the virgin birth – as prophesied by Isaiah) and that You indeed have sent Me.<br>➢ They also believe that You have sent Me. |
| V9. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given Me; for they are thine | ➢ **Notice something important here:** Jesus does not pray for the people of the world – but only for the ones that the Father has given to Him.<br>➢ Jesus prays for us, because we belong to the Father, through the Blood of Jesus.<br>➢ Have you ever thought of that – Jesus prays for us !!! Isn't that awesome?<br>➢ **This is a clear warning to us.** If we reject Jesus, we are "of the world" in the eyes of Jesus Christ and therefore outside His protection, His covering and His prayers. |
| V10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I AM glorified in them. | ➢ Here again we see Jesus confirming His triune relationship with His Father. I am in you, and You are in Me. What You have is mine & and what I have is Yours<br>➢ Because You have glorified Me, then I am glorified in them. |


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| | |
|---|---|
| V11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou has given Me, that they maybe one as we are (one). | ➢ Jesus is prophetically proclaiming to His Father that He has already risen. That is **"Faith without limits"**<br>➢ But that all the disciples that the Father has given to Him maybe protected by the Father and that there maybe unity among them.<br>➢ Remember: where there is unity – God commands a blessing!!!.<br>➢ We have been given faith with limits. As we become more Christ-like, therefore will our faith limit be increased, towards the faith limit of Christ, that is: Faith without limits.<br>➢ Then we will be able to ask the Father **anything** in the name of Jesus, **believing** and He will do it for us. |
| V12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest Me I have kept, and none have been lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. | ➢ Jesus confirms that all of the disciples have been kept protected by Jesus in the father's name – none have been lost to satan, except the son of perdition, [**who has been allowed to be lost]** so that the prophecy of betrayal for 30 pieces of silver maybe fulfilled.<br>➢ **Ponder this thought:** After Judas realises what he has done, could he have come to Jesus (even after the cross) and asked for forgiveness for his sin?<br>➢ **What is the only sin that cannot be forgiven?** |
| V13. And now I come to thee; and I speak these things in the World (before my ascension) that they might have My joy fulfilled in them. | ➢ Jesus wants His disciples (and all who claim to belong to Him) to have the revelation of the relationship which exists between Jesus and His Father.<br>➢ They dwell within each other, & because we belong to the Father, through the blood of Jesus, that the joy that Jesus shares with His Father can also be shared by us. |
| V14. I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I AM not of the world. | ➢ Jesus again states that He has revealed God's Word to them. He IS the WORD.<br>➢ Jesus is again confirming to the Father that He has revealed Himself to them.<br>➢ Jesus prophetically declares that: Because of this revelation, the world hates them.<br>➢ Why? Because they are living IN the world, but they are not OF the world. [they belong to Jesus, they don't belong to satan – the prince of this world.]<br>➢ Jesus again confirms that He is not OF the world, but is the Creator. [Before the world was – I AM] |


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| | |
|---|---|
| V15. I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from evil. | ➢ Jesus does not want the Father to take the disciples out of the world (right now), but that the Father may protect them from evil, in the work that they have been called to do. |
| V16. They are not of the world, even as I AM not of the world. | ➢ Again Jesus reminds the Father that the disciples are not of the world, even as Jesus Himself is not of the world. |
| V17. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. | ➢ Sanctify => [bless, consecrate, make holy, make sacred, purify, approve] them through thy truth.<br>➢ Thy word is truth. Jesus is the word. Jesus is the truth.<br>➢ Therefore, sanctify them through ME. |
| V18. As thou has sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. | ➢ Even before the cross and the resurrection, Jesus is confirming to the Father the Great Commission that He will give to the disciples prior to His ascension. |
| V19. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. | ➢ Jesus re-affirms His holiness, His sacredness, His approval by the Father, so that by the revelation of this truth, they (His disciples) might also be holy.<br>➢ Be ye holy because I AM holy. |
| V20. Neither I pray for them alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; | ➢ Jesus confirms that He prays for all people who hear the word of God, spoken by His disciples, <u>and believe it!</u><br>➢ **Again this is a warning for us**. Those who hear the word of God and don't believe it – or reject it, are cursed, because Jesus will refuse to pray for them. |
| V21. That they all maybe one; as thou Father are in Me and I in thee, that they also maybe one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent Me. | ➢ Again Jesus is requesting that there be unity - (the oneness) among the disciples, just like the unity – (the oneness), that exists between the Father and the Son.<br>➢ Why? So that the world (the unbelievers) recognise and believe that You (Father) have sent Me into the world to proclaim Your Word, the whole Truth. |
| V22. And the glory which thou has give Me, I have given them; that they maybe one, even as we are one. | ➢ Do you realise that God has given all His disciples the Glory of God?<br>➢ Do you realise that the Glory of God dwells inside of You?<br>➢ Count the number of times that Jesus talks about unity in this prayer.<br>➢ ***It is one of the most important parts of the prayer that Jesus prays to His Father.***<br>➢ This prayer is for the Disciples, not for Jesus to gain strength to prepare Him for the ordeal He is about to face. |


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| | |
|---|---|
| V23. I in them, and thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world my know that thou has sent Me and has loved them, as thou has loved Me. | ➢ Again Jesus prays for unity among His disciples, so that the World my know that the Father loves them (the people in the world) [just like the Father loves Jesus], and that the Father has sent Jesus into the world to tell them this great news.<br>➢ God Loves You. God is Love. |
| V24. Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I AM; that they may behold MY glory, which thou has given Me; for thou loved Me before the foundation of the world. | ➢ Jesus asks the Father for the disciples to be where He is (and where He will be) so that they may behold His transfigured glory and the love that You have had for ME even from before the world was created. |
| V25. O righteous Father, the world has not known Thee, but I know Thee, and these have known that Thou have sent Me. | ➢ We know that Jesus is without sin and is perfect and righteous.<br>➢ We need this revelation; that even Jesus referred to His Father as "the righteous one".<br>➢ This earnest desire to have this oneness with the Father through Jesus Christ, is the revelation that will confirm to the world that Jesus has sent us into the world to reveal His truth to mankind. |
| V26. And I have declared unto them thy name; and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved Me may be in them; and I in them. | ➢ In this final verse of this prayer, Jesus again re-affirms that He has declared the name of the Father to them.<br>➢ He also declares that He will continue to proclaim the name of the Father to them; so that the love that the Father has for the Son can be transferred to them; and that the relationship that exists between the Father and the Son, may also exist between the disciples and Jesus. |

# MODULE ASSIGNMENT : THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

**Method of Assessment:**

1. The class will break into small groups to undertake this research.
2. The groups will present their findings as a presentation to the whole class body.
3. Each member of the specific group will be allocated a group mark, as part of their assessment results. This assignment is valued at 20% of the total mark for this module.

**Assignment Task:**

1. After studying the Gospel of John, please explain in note form (with scriptural references) why Your Group Believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
2. Now that you believe this, what are you going to do about it, to make sure that you grow and become mature in Christ?
3. What do you know about the Holy Spirit, after Studying John's Gospel?


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# Outline History of the Apostles

| Name | Writings | Death |
|---|---|---|
| Simon bar Jonas (Peter) | I Peter<br>II Peter | Crucified upside down in Rome<br>(~ 64 AD) |
| James bar Zebedee | | Beheaded by Herod (44 AD) (Acts 12:1-2) |
| John bar Zebedee | Gospel of John, 1,2,3 John, Revelation | Boiled in oil, then banished to Patmos, then freed, and died a natural death in Ephesus |
| Andrew bar Jonas | | Crucified on the St. Andrews Cross |
| Philip | | Died a martyr in Hierapolis |
| Bartholomew (Nathanael) | | Flayed to death in Armenia |
| Thomas | | Martyrdom at Mt. Thomas, near Madras in India, started the church which still bears His name today (2,000 years later) the Church of Mar Thoma. |
| Matthew (Levi) | Gospel of Matthew | Martyr in Ethiopia |
| James | Epistle of James | Crucified in Egypt |
| Jude (Thaddaeus) | Epistle of Jude | Martyr in Persia |
| Simon the Zealot | | Tradition says he was crucified |
| Judas Iscariot | | Betrayed Jesus, then hanged himself |
| Matthias (extra Apostle) | | Martyrdom in Ethiopia |
| Saul (Paul) | 14 Epistles | Beheaded in Rome about 67 AD |


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# THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN :

**Summary:**

1. The First Epistle of John was written to remind believers of the basics that Jesus taught His disciples:
2. The most important principle being His love for us and how we should put that love into practise in our own lives.
3. John reminds us that to Love Christ, we must be able to put aside our differences and express love for one another – **under all circumstances.**
4. Love our brother & sister believers
5. Love unbelievers
6. Love our enemies

**The First Epistle of John: Chapter 1**

**By Whom**
**To Whom**
**Why ?**

**By Whom:** Attributed to the beloved Disciple, who was John – the son of Zebedee.

**1. What sort of a man was he?**

- A man naturally full of energy (Mk. 3:17)
- Intolerant (Mk. 9:38)
- Vindictive (Lu. 9:54)
- Ambitious (Mk. 10:35-37)
- Learned the lesson of Love in the school of Christ: – Jn. 13:23, 1 Jn. 2:9-10, 1 Jn. 3:14-18, 1 Jn. 4:7- 11
- Was entrusted with the care of the Lord's mother at the crucifixion. [Jn. 19:25-26]

The Lord gave John the responsibility of caring for His mother, over and above his own step-brothers – ***which would be seen as significant in that culture***.

By this time, Approx. 80-85 AD, all the other disciples of Christ, including Paul, have been executed. John had already written his Gospel (the Gospel of John) and is now, several years later in Ephesus writing to encourage the Body of Christ, before his exile to the Isle of Patmos[10], where he lived until he was allowed to return to Ephesus and his death at the end of the first century AD.

The style of writing is of an eyewitness to the events described, and one who has authority within the church, so he does not even have to sign his name to the gospel to give it credence or authority.

**2. To Whom was it written?**

[10] **This raises the question** : Are you prepared to be killed or imprisoned (exiled) out of your comfort zone, or even Australia, for preaching and teaching the Gospel ?


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The letter is addressed to no-one in particular and is unsigned. • However, with careful study, it is clear that it is addressed to all believers, especially those who want to know "**how to**" love God, and "**how to**" love one another.[11]

In English, "**how to**" has only 1 meaning. In Hebrew it has 2 meanings. We need to understand this clearly as we commence to study this book of the Bible.

**"How to" = > HALAKAH : means "guidance"** from the Hebrew verb "halach" which means **"How to walk"**. Halakah teaches a person how to **"walk in the ways of the Lord".** It deals with all the details of God's Commandments.

**HAGGADAH : means "narration"** from the Hebrew verb "Higgid", which means **"to tell why"**. • Haggadah gives the reason behind the commandments . ("if your son shall ask you why ? Then you will tell him why - because .....").[12]

**3. Why was it Written ?**

There are 4 clear reasons for writing this Epistle to believers;[13]

– To add to their joy (1 Jn. 1:3-4)

- To guard them against committing sin ( 1 Jn. 2:1)

– To warn them against false teachers (1 Jn. 2:26)

– To strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and to assure them of eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13)

➢ **<u>Authorship</u>**

John writes as an eyewitness, who has walked, talked and touched Jesus Christ in person. John writes God's Word, to the Body of Christ, as one having authority, so that we will walk a journey worthy of Jesus Christ.

➢ **<u>Fellowship with Christ</u>**

1. 1 John 1:3 … And this fellowship that we have (which is the distinguishing mark of Christians) is with the Father & with His Son Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

---

11 *" Each of us has his own group in which he/she feels at home. In that group you can relax and know and feel that you belong. Yet even in any group like this, arguments come up, friendships splinter, emptiness deepens and frustration at (other people's) lack of understanding boils up inside you. We depend on friendships to provide something we all deeply need. Why does it get spoiled so often ? Apostle John, now an old, warm hearted man of God, filled with agape love, (the absolute love of God) shows us in the three Epistles the kind of friendship and camaraderie that gives us what we so desperately need to live quality lives with those around us – believer and non-believers alike.*

12 Ref: "Roots of Our Beliefs", page 7 www.facebook.com/cammbooks

13 1 Jn. 1:3-4: In this passage John reminds the readers that He was an eyewitness and offers encouragement to those who follow his guidance and instructions.
1 Jn. 2:1: John reminds us of sin and the consequence of not acknowledging that we are sinners (Rom.3:23) and also how to get the sin "wiped out" for good.
1 Jn. 2:26: John reminds the believers to test the Word of the teachers as was also done in 2 Pet. 2:1


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2. 1 Jn. 1:7 .. But if we really are living and walking in the Light as He (Himself) is in the Light, we have true unbroken fellowship with one another.
3. If we are not having unbroken fellowship with our brothers & sisters, then there is a problem in us which must be addressed.
4. John promises that the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from our guilt & sin in all its forms & manifestations.

➢ **<u>Jesus is the Advocate & Wrath Remover</u>**

1. Jesus is continually interceding for us in the throne room of God – not for what we have done (or not done) but by presenting to God the Father what Jesus has done on the cross for us.
2. In presenting this evidence to God the Father, Jesus effectively removes the Father's wrath and anger from us, so that when we give an account of our Lives before Him it will be without any anger.

**The Test of a TRUE Christian [1 Jn. 2:4-11]**

| | |
|---|---|
| • I am a Christian. | • **Confession with our mouths – testimonies of God's love & forgiveness** |
| • I am going to heaven. | • **Proclaim our Faith in the promises of God** |
| • I belong to Christ | • **Profess your belief in Christ – in words & deeds.** |
| • I do what Christ tells me to do. | • **I am obedient to God's Word & His instructions for my life** |
| • I learn to love God more & more. | • **The example for living my life is that of Jesus Christ. (What would Jesus do in this/that situation?)** |
| • I live as Christ did. | • **By having God's agape love in my heart I can love my brothers & sisters in all situations – <u>without giving or taking offence</u>.** |
| • I love one another with agape love – no offence given or taken. | |

How can we see these things in a practical sense:-

**True Christians Agape Love:**
26. agape, ag-ah'-pay; from G25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence; spec. (plur.) a love-feast:--(feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love. Appears 116 times in 105 verses in the Scriptures.


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**The Test of a FALSE Christian [1 Jn. 2:4-11]**

- Does not do what Christ tells him to. (v4)
- Anyone who dislikes his brothers & sisters – is still in darkness – under satan's control & bidding. (v9)
- Loves the evil of this world, more than the light of Christ. (verse 15 - 16)
- Evil world is fading away (v17)

- Disobedient to God's word - (any of it!)
- Holds a grudge – un forgiveness in his/her heart.
- Sexual crazes, fashion freak, [buys everything for appeals sake], pride from wealth, position & power.
- These things turn to dust & have no eternal benefit.
- People who follow them will not see God – but will live in eternal darkness.

**Loves the evil of this world more than God:**

A false Christian may have a nice veneer on the surface – but it is through his/her actions, or lack of actions that we see the real spiritual person emerge.

John is writing this passage to warn believers to be on their guard – to discern the truth from the false doctrines. People today who proclaim that Jesus is not the Christ, who proclaim that Jesus is not the Son of God, does not know Christ and does not have the Father in Him.

One of the prime functions of the Holy Spirit is to confirm to us the Truth of God's Word and those who speak it. People who do not acknowledge the existence of the Holy Spirit, **or its work in the world today** are not recognising the truth of God's word. This is a truth which the people following Islam need to hear and understand.

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to the believers as He wishes, so as to reveal the truth of God's word to individual Christians, groups of Christians in a flock, or to the whole Body of Christ, if necessary.

John is confirming the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believers and its importance as the guide to keep you on the straight & narrow path to glory. With this in mind it is therefore imperative that we desire the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in our lives, so that we can be guided into all truth, we can discern the true & false teachers and can encourage the Body of Christ at all times.


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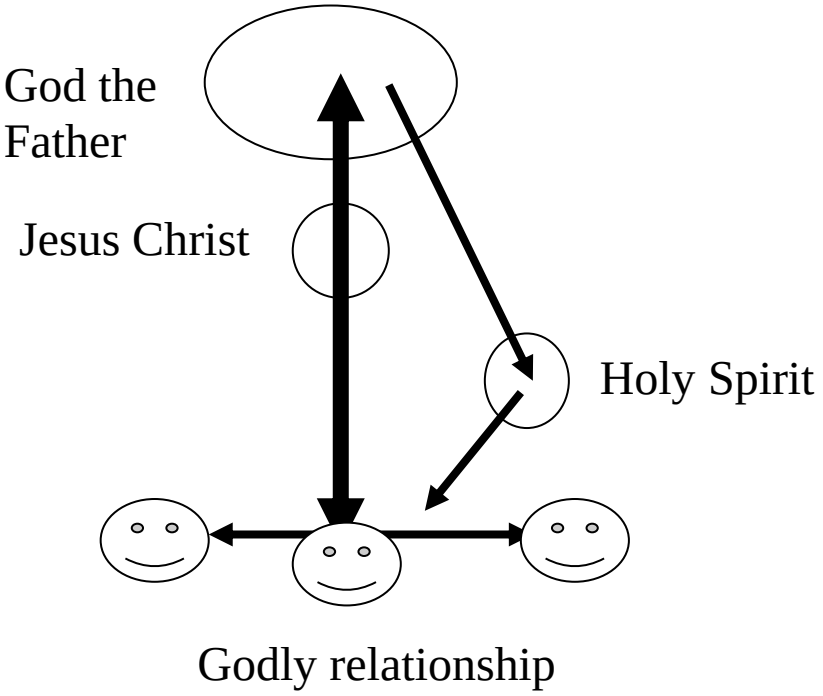
**REVISION**




## 1 John 3: 1-3 - What shall we be ?

- **The wonder of it stops John in his tracks :**
  - "Look at what the Father has given us!!!" We are called the Children of God – and we are !!! "This is not something which will happen in the future – but **WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD – HERE ON EARTH - RIGHT NOW !!!**
  - This should be an incentive for us to ask the Holy Spirit to help us to become more like Jesus here on earth, so that "***Thy will be done, (here on earth) as it is already being done in heaven"***
  - The world does not understand us, or acknowledge who we are, because they don't know or recognise Jesus Christ, or the Father which is in Him.
  - In verse 3 John refers to a vision of Jesus (God Himself in his glory): ***"When He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He really is".***
  -
- A right relationship with God the Father is only achieved by recognising who Jesus Christ is.
- To have victory over sin, one must first admit that one has sinned and then acknowledge that sinned can be cleansed only through the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- To love one another – with Agape Love – is only achieved when there is no sin in your life.
- The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth – to prompt us of our sins, to reveal hidden truths to us in the Scriptures and to empower us to have victory over satan, his principalities and powers.
- When John is writing in the Greek text, He never considered Jesus apart from the Father – so when you see the word HIM it refers to Jesus and the Father – in Him.

## 1 Jn. 4: 1-6 : The Spirit of truth & the Spirit of error

- This is not a new problem – even in the OT there were false prophets. Paul had to give a ruling on when a man was speaking by the ***"Spirit of God"*** **(1. Cor. 12:3)**
- Don't believe everything you hear – learn to "***Test the Spirits".*** **What is the test ??? To confess that Jesus Christ became "flesh and dwelt among us".**
- But there is also a Spirit which does not and will not confess Jesus. It is the spirit of the ***antichrist*** *and it dwells among us today*.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**End Time, Anti-Christ, Holy Spirit**

- John proclaims that the end time is approaching. (v 18)
- John defines Anti-Christ as : ***people who are "Against Christ", who were in the Church, but who left because they were not really part of the true "Body of Christ".*** **(v 19)**
- People who refuse Christ, refuse the Father also. (v 22-23)
- Anybody who does not believe in the Trinity has a problem.
- The person of the Holy Spirit has come upon you, verifying to you the truth in God's word. (v20)
- The Holy Spirit lives within you and He reveals **all truth** about situations to you. (v 27)
-
- John encourages the believers that they should not worry because they have "overcome" satan because ***He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.***
- ***So, if the Spirit of God dwells in you, then you will be able to confirm the "spirit of truth" when people speak to you. Also through the gift of discernment you will be able to identify the spirit of error and reject what you hear.***

**Testing the Spirits:** The test is the attitude of the person to Jesus Christ. If ***the Spirit of God*** is in the man, he will confess that ***Jesus Christ has come in the flesh*** – with the emphasis on the "Flesh". This confession is not a human discovery – but is revelation from God. (The Word became flesh and dwelt among us Jn. 1:14) and (2 Jn. 7)

**The Antichrist Spirit:** John had already mentioned in 1 Jn. 2:18 that there were many antichrists in the world, people who do not know Jesus Christ as their saviour, nor the Father who dwells in Him and the true believers. Here John is again reinforcing his earlier statements to remind people not to be misled.

- ***Overcome is mentioned 17 times in revelation & 6 times in John's Epistles.***

- *Because you have the Holy spirit dwelling with you – you have the ability to recognise, whether the person talking to you is speaking with the spirit of truth, or the spirit of error.*
- *We have been given all authority, through the power of the name of Jesus Christ. When we command the spirit to leave, if it is the spirit of the antichrist it must obey, because principalities and powers must obey the name of Jesus Christ. However, the third part of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit will remain, and you with then have confirmation that the one who speaks does indeed speak with the power and truth of the Holy Spirit, because the Scripture states that the Spirit dwelling with you will lead you to all truth..*

# 1 Jn. 4:7-21 God is love

- Throughout the whole of John's writings he emphasises & re-emphasises that **God IS Love**.
- We should love one another and this LOVE is not a human achievement, but it is of divine origin.
- If a person is able to Love "one another" it clearly shows that he is born of God and that he knows God .
- The Love that John writes about here is about who God is, not who we are.
- The real meaning of love and the real SOURCE OF LIFE, can only be discerned through the cross. When we realise that Christ came, while we were yet sinners, to be a propitiation (Gk. Hilasmos) for our sins, that Christ died for us, in advance of our births, so that we could have a love relationship with the Father.

***"God is love"*** is one of the greatest statements in the whole Bible. It means more than the fact that God is loving, it defines His pure nature. God's love does not depend on who we are, but because of who He is. The love that John writes about here is not seen anywhere among men of the world. It is made manifest through the Son, who came to bring life to mankind and to bring it more abundantly.

**Summary**

- **Verses 7-12: Love one another -** Remember, if we don't love one another, then the love of God is not in us.
- **Verses 13-16: Abiding in Love:** To become more Christ-like we have to learn how to put God's love into practise in our lives, and by our example, into the lives of others.


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- **Verses 17-21: The perfecting of Love:** The Perfect love of God is a free gift. We have to learn how to use it, in a Christ-like manner to become more like Him.

## Points to Ponder

- Islam is a religion which requires families to send their sons & daughters to die for God.
- Christianity is a faith where God sent down His Son to die for us.

The First displays a true test of the spirit of error, because they deny Christ is God's Son, that he came in the flesh and that He was crucified, died, was resurrected and now sits at God the Father's right hand. God the Father clearly shows His mercy to us, recognising that while we were yet sinners He sent His son to die for us, so that we may have an eternal love relationship with Him.

**1 Jn. 5:1-5 Faith's Victory**

The thought of love leads to that of one's relationship to God, and that in turn to victory. Love and faith are wrapped up in one another. **(*cf. 4:16) and the believer overcomes the world.***

**V1:** We must have faith to believe that J**esus <u>IS</u> the Son of God.** If we have this faith we become a ***Child of God.*** Faith is inseparably connected with our view of Jesus, a truth which is insisted upon throughout this whole Epistle. It is necessary to believe *Jesus is the Son of God* and then we become ***a child of God***. The confession that Jesus is the Christ is not a result of human insight, but evidence that divine work has taken place in that person. Further evidence is shown by loving the fellow-believers, because ***whoever loves the parent also loves the child***.

**V2:** John continues his emphasis on our love for God by our example in loving our brethren, and by our obedience to His commandments. **Remember "obedience is better than sacrifice."** Real love is shown by our desire to do God's will.

**V3:** God's will maybe irksome or difficult, but never a burden – to do God's will is a delight !!! John recognises that love has a natural human expression in doing things which delight our Father.

**V4:** Overcame & Overcomers 3528. nikao, nik-ah'-o; from G3529; to subdue (lit. or fig.):--conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory. **The first word maybe translated as "overcame" and refers to the victory of Christ when He overcame evil,** the second when be believed in Christ and as such got the victory of satan and spiritual death.

**V5:** Victory depends upon our faith that: ***Jesus <u>is</u> the Son of God.*** John re-emphasises his statements by repetition, in 2 verses we have references to overcoming the world 3 times. Victory comes to him ***who believes that Jesus <u>IS</u> the Son of God.*** If you don't believe it, then there will never be any victory in your life, in fact you will never be able to overcome the world because you are trying to do it in your own strength.

**1 Jn. 5:6-12 The Witness to the Son**

Since the right view of Jesus is important, John sites some of the testimony which establishes His position.

**V6:** ***Water = baptism, Blood = death, Heavenly voice = solemn entry into His life's work.*** It is said that some heretics believed that Christ come upon Jesus when He commenced His ministry, but left Him before His death. This is not true and is emphasised by John in the reference to the ***water and the blood*** which were present in Jesus when pierced by the spear on the cross.
**Remember: Jesus cried out :"It is finished"** (His earthly work) on the cross before He died.

**V7:** ***The Spirit is the witnessing one,*** (present participle – indicates an on-going, continuing activity) We must continually remember that the Holy Spirit has been given to us for this specific purpose:

- To lead us into all truth, to continually witness to us the correct spiritual interpretation of God's Word, to allow us to "edify", exhort" and "comfort" the Body of Christ.


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**V8:** 3 witnesses: (a) the Holy Spirit, (b) the water and (c) the Blood. All for man's salvation. **These 3 witnesses are harmonious.** The inner witness of the Spirit and all that is involved in Christ's Baptism and His death are not 3 unrelated items. These 3 witnesses point to **"one act of God"** in Christ for man's salvation.

**V9:** God gives the ultimate testimony. God has borne witness to His Son Himself. John explains that we believe our "fellow-men", then how much more should we believe the Testimony of God the Father, who bore testimony of Jesus Christ His Son by stating this Himself.

**V10:** If you don't believe God's testimony about His Son then you call God a liar. John puts no difference between believing in God, or believing in the Son of God, because John believes that Jesus Christ is in fact God incarnate – God made flesh. (John 1:14)

V11: **God gave us eternal life & this life is in His Son.** Life eternal is life with Christ and life in Christ. God testimony is that He gave us eternal life. Eternal Life is God's own deed and God's own gift and as we contemplate this truth we see a revelation of God. ***This life is in His Son.*** We cannot think of eternal life apart from the Son, nor can we think of God's testimony apart from Him. Life eternal is life with Christ and Life in Christ.

**V12:** Eternal life and the Son go together. It is impossible to have one without the other Its quite simple: if you don't believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God – you don't have a life relationship with the Son, so therefore you cannot have the Gift of eternal life which has been given to man through Jesus Christ.

**1 Jn. 5:13-21: The Knowledge of Eternal Life**

**The Gospel of John** was written so that its readers <u>might believe and so have life</u> (Jn. 20:31).
By Contrast **this Epistle was written to give believers assurance that <u>they have life</u>**.
**<u>Confidence: V13-15</u>**

**V13:** ***You who believe, (***in the surname of the Son of God) ***that you have eternal life.*** **Addressed to Christians – not unbelievers.** This is the only place in this Epistle where John refers to ***believe in the name of Jesus (His full person) (Peter bar Jonah) in this case: (Jesus bar Elohiym)***
***3686. onoma, on'-om-ah; from a presumed der. of the base of G1097 (comp. G3685); a "name" (lit. or fig.) [authority, character]:--called, (+ sur-) name (-d).***

**V14:** Prayer is not a device for inducing God to change His mind, but must be according to the following concepts: It must be according to His will to be effective. Prayer must be in faith (Mk.11:24), In the name of Jesus (Jn.14:14), offered by those who abide in Christ (Jn.15:7), and who have forgiven them who have offended them (Mk.11:25). It must be accompanied by obedience (1 Jn.3:22). It must not be for one's one gratification and/or passions. (Jas.4:3) Confidence is connected with assurance: Ask anything in prayer ***according to His will*** and ***He hears us***

**V15:** John now changes his attention from God hearing our prayers to God ***grants our requests.*** **Before we pray we should ask ourselves: "If we believe that God will answer this prayer, will that answer bring glory and honour to Him?"**

**<u>Prayer for Wrongdoers</u>**

**V16:** Intercessory prayer. John distinguishes between sin ***which is mortal & sin which is not mortal.*** However, all sin is wrongdoing against God and it puts a barrier between us and God. There is an abrupt change to the forgiveness of sin, by believers becoming intercessors for others. Intercessory prayer is a powerful weapon against the evil one. ( "The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16) Here John indicates that if we see a brother sin we must pray for him – God will hear our prayers and ***give him life.*** This infers that he may not have been a Christian, but was "dead through trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) Therefore we should regard ***mortal sin*** as a state of being, an act of rebellion against God. (1 Jn. 3:14). We are warned that blaspheming against the Holy Spirit **<u>will not be forgiven</u>** (Lk. 12:10) Christians must be careful not to sin, and if they do, to repent and make your position righteous before God, so that we are not removed from the ranks of the "saved" forever.


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**V:18-21: The believer's knowledge**

John re-emphasises his previous teaching with 3 points that the people ***know***:

- ***"anyone born of God does not sin"***
  If ***he is born of God*** then ***the evil one won't touch him***.
- ***"The whole world is in the power of the evil one."***
- ***"The Son of God has come" - "He has given us understanding" , we know "Him who is true", we are "in Him as He is in the Son."***
- ***Little children, keep yourself far away from false gods***

**V18:** John is again referring to habitual sin.

**V19: Literally means : lies in the evil one.** Lies inert, unable to assert itself against the power of evil. 2749. keimai, ki'-mahee; mid. of a prim. verb; to lie outstretched (lit. or fig.):--be (appointed, laid up, made, set), lay, lie. Comp. G5087.

**V20:** John directs us once again to the incarnation. The emphasis is on the actuality of the arrival. (Gk.hêkei) 2240. heko, hay'-ko; a prim. verb; to arrive, i.e. be present (lit. or fig.):--come. John makes it very clear right through this Epistle that the relationship between the Father and the Son is very close, in fact intertwined.
When we have Jesus indwelling in us, it in fact means that we also have the Father in dwelling in us (because the Father indwells in Christ). We also know that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. So to be "***In Christ"*** means that all parts of the Trinity dwells within us.

**V21:** At the conclusion of this Epistle John again encourages us to follow the path which Christ has explained to us through His example and through the eyewitnesses of those who walked with Him, keeping away from all idols and false gods – activities which would bring our witness for Christ into disrepute and bring temptation and trouble upon us.


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# THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

**Salutations: (V1-3)**

1. From "*The elder"* to
2. The "Elect lady Kyria" & her children
    - Love & truth is prominent in 2 John & 3 John.
    - Truth appears 5 times in the first 4 verses.
3. Addition of "mercy" to grace & peace in the greeting is unusual, as is the reference "to us" instead of "to you".
4. The writer identifies himself as "The old Elder", which is used either to identify his age, or his position within the Church Body. It is recognised that John lived for many years as "The Elder" at the church in Ephesus before he was exiled onto the Isle of Patmos. As this Epistle was written to people that John knew intimately, there was no need to identify himself any further.
    - 4245. presbuteros, pres-boo'-ter-os; compar. of presbus (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; spec. an Isr. Sanhedrist (also fig. member of the celestial council) or Chr. "presbyter":--elder (-est), old.
5. The letter is addressed to Kyria (Cyria) & Her children. Discussion suggests either a well known figure of the Church – or a reference to a Church Body and the congregation. The following verses reinforces this belief.
    - John affirms that he loves the lady & her children "*in the truth."* Love and Truth are very prominent in this Epistle. Notice the order & sequence:
        1. **Whom I love** … *because of the truth,*
        2. **Truth can be known** …. *It abides in believers,*
        3. **Truth** … *will be with them forever,*
        4. This is the same truth described by Jesus in John 14:6.
6. The salutation is unique because of the inclusion of mercy, which only appears in 1 & 2 Timothy, as the only other place in the New Testament. In addition most greetings are addressed to "to you" or "in you". This one in fact says "to us" – meaning that it also includes "the writer".

**2 John 4-6 The command to love**

- John is delighted that some of the children of the lady are "Following (walking) in the truth" *cf "living a Christian life".*
- To follow this truth is not an option selected by man – *but has been commanded by God the Father.*
- John again reminds the readers *"to love one another" – both those who "walk the walk" and those who are "yet to follow this path" it is a commandment of God.*
- Modern thinking is that *LOVE* and *OBEDIENCE* are contrasted – Obedience being connected with a legalistic spirit. <u>But this antithesis is wrong and false.</u>
- *<u>TRUE LOVE DELIGHTS TO OBEY GOD'S WORD</u> :*
- *TRUE AGAPE LOVE & OBEDIENCE GO HAND IN HAND*


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**2 John 7-11 Sound Doctrine**

Verse 7 : Many "deceivers" have (gone out from the church) and entered into the world – people who refuse to acknowledge and teach that Jesus Christ has indeed come in the flesh.

**T**his is the first time the writer introduces this word. In 1 John, they were referred to as "antichrists" – but here as "Deceivers", people who are in error in their teaching, but who also lead others astray from the true path.

Verse 8 : Be careful not to loose what you have and fall away – without receiving the full reward already promised. Remember God promises to reward those who faithfully serve Him. John is reminding the believers that they must be continually checking their belief systems against the Word of God, to ensure that they are receiving correct and timely teaching.

This follows on from the same instructions given by Paul that we must be continually checking what is being taught to us, that it lines up with the Word of God. Paul even goes as far as saying that even if an angel comes down and starts teaching something which does not line up with God's word – reject it!!!

Verse 9: The false teachers considered themselves as ***"advanced thinkers" .*** John considers that they have *"thought themselves right out of Christianity"*

***We should be people who abide in the doctrine of Christ*** as described in the Scriptures and <u>not deviate from that theme – **EVER!!!**</u>.

History shows that from time to time people in the church follow new trends or fads. History also shows that these trends usually lead to splits within churches, people loosing their faith, or being hurt by their fellow believers. We must be constantly reminded that the Word of God is divinely delivered to the Body of Christ. It is complete and needs no revision, or addition – only expounding and activation by church leaders, church elders and the Body of Christ.

Verse 10: <u>Hospitality was encouraged in the early church</u>, as a way to bless the preachers and to allow them to spread the word "from house to house". John however warns that <u>if they don't preach the true Gospel they must not be allowed into houses</u>, nor given sustenance, hence reducing the possibility of their wrong doctrine from spreading amongst the believers.

Verse 11: John says that if you allow this false teacher to teach you are guilty – ***you share his wicked work***

John is reminding the believers that they must be continually checking their belief systems against the Word of God, to ensure that they are receiving correct and timely teaching.

**2 John 12-13 Conclusion**

John ends the letter here because he has much more to say – but it is better to explain it "face to face" than to send it in a letter. His reference to : ***"I would rather not use paper and ink"*** maybe because he does not want to discuss private problems in a "public letter".

Here is an important lesson in people relations. How we handle problems with our brothers and sisters is very important. Remember we are told to discuss problems with our brothers and/or sister firstly "face to face".

If this does not bring the desired result then discuss the matter before 2 or 3 elders or other mature Christians. Only if these efforts turn out to be fruitless are we then to make the problem public by bringing it before the Body of Christ.

It is quite important that Church Elders and Church leaders make the Body aware of this Scriptural method of dealing with problems, so that God's Word is put into practise and God can bless the outcome.


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## Home Study Assignment

Please complete the questions stating your beliefs (with references to back them up)

1. What is the difference between **Eternal life** and **Salvation ?**
2. Specify what steps you must take to receive **salvation?**
3. Specify how you receive **eternal life**?
4. In Matthew 25:32-33 Jesus refers to the sheep & goats in His flock. Which ones do you think were "saved" and which ones received "eternal life".
5. In Luke 9:3-6 the disciples went out and healed the sick. Is this proof of :
   - **Salvation ?**
   - **Eternal life ?**
6. Did any people from the Old Testament receive eternal life? Name three.

# THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

V1. Salutations from The Elder to beloved Gaius.

As in 2 John, the writer identifies himself as the "old Elder" and addresses the letter to *"The beloved Gaius".*

(Acts 19:29 KJV) "And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre."

(Acts 20:4 KJV) "And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

1 Cor 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

V2. Customary 1st century prayer. In the 1st Century it was customary to have a prayer at the introduction of each letter. Here John prays that Gaius' affairs prosper in the same way that his soul does.

V3. Testimony of Gaius' spiritual life. John finds out about Gaius from the testimony of some friends during a visit. Not only is it important for Christians to give their testimonies about what Jesus is doing in their own individual lives – but also in the lives of others.

V4. John is overjoyed when he hears that people who have heard the message of Christ *(his spiritual children)* are walking in the truth. There is no greater joy than for a Christian than to know that someone you have told the good news to, is following Jesus Christ. – *These are your spiritual children. How many do you have today ???*

V5. We now enter to basis of the letter: **Hospitality**. It was the custom of the early church for local Christians to provide hospitality to travelling preachers or evangelists who were spreading the Good news. John commends Gaius for his hospitality, both to known Christians and to strangers.

UNFORTUNATELY, in our "enlightened society" of the 21st century, this is now the exception instead of the rule. In some countries, it is now expected for the "visiting pastors, evangelists & teachers, to not only provide for their own accommodation and living expenses, but to provide the finances for the costs of the hiring of halls, etc. as well as paying for the food of the people who come to hear the Word of God. This is scripturally way off base.


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Jesus told His disciples that when you go out to preach ***take noting with you.*** The same should apply today, because God's Word has not changed.

V6. Even though the act by Gaius may have been in private, the testimony has been made in public before the congregation. Because they trusted God's word, the travelling preachers accepted nothing from the heathens, but relied upon the hospitality of the Believers for their food, lodgings and comfort.

V7. Accept nothing from the heathen.

V8. We have a responsibility to support the "Mission of Christ" to spread the Gospel to all nations and generations. ***By providing support for the "Gospel spreaders"*** we are in fact joining them in their missionary activities. The word has not changed. We still have that responsibility today.

History shows that a church that fully supports Missions (Local, National & International) will become a growing church, being blessed for their faithfulness, with strong leadership, a vibrant ministry and a loving and caring spiritual heart.

V9. What happens when people in authority are not following God's plan, or recognise people in authority within the church. God cannot allow His plans to be delayed or subverted, so the offenders must be dealt with. Gaius is counselled by John not to follow this evil man – but to follow God ***for good is from God.***

V10. Diotrephes has slandered the Elder and other missionaries and stopped people within this church body from offering hospitality – even putting those out of the church who tried to do so. It is clear he had to be dealt with for his actions.

V11. Gaius is commended for his actions in following good – not evil. John makes a clear comparison here between the "good acts" of Gaius and the "bad" actions of Diotrephes

V12. Demetrius (an Ephesian silversmith) is commended by John, a faithful servant. Who was this man?

**Acts 19:24** For a certain *man* named **Demetrius,** a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

Acts 19:38 Wherefore if **Demetrius,** and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

**Demetrius** hath good report of all *men,* and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

John concludes the third Epistle, just the same as the second, by saying he has much he wants to write but will speak to the believers in person.

John prays **"peace be upon the congregation"** a common form of prayer at meeting and at departing. In addition John requests that Gaius send his personal greetings to each member of the congregation (the friends) so that they know he cares for them individually.

The example defined here by John is clearly an example we should continue to follow here in the Body of Christ today. Each member of the Body is special and requires our constant attention, love and prayers.


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## Module Assignment for 1,2,3 JOHN:

The students will break up into small groups and discuss the following:

1. Reflecting upon what you learned previously in the Gospel of John, what major points are identified and added in these three Epistles.
2. The small groups will prepare a presentation to deliver to the class. The groups can use any of the following methods to make their presentation:
    a. Short-form notes
    b. Multi-media presentation
    c. Discussion panel
    d. Narrative
    e. Drama.
3. Each group will be assigned a mark for their presentation, which will be allocated to every member of that particular group for their assessment.


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# THE BOOK OF REVELATION

**OVERVIEW:**

In the Book of Revelation there are references to the "unveiling", "revealing" or "uncovering" of signs and events, which:

A) HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE

B) ARE PRESENTLY TAKING PLACE [AD 100], or

C) WILL TAKE PLACE – IN THE FUTURE

The English word "Revelation" comes from the Greek word ***"akopalupis"*** *meaning* ***unveiling****,* or ***uncovering****.*

Elsewhere in the scriptures, this same word is used and translated in English as: ***"manifestation"*** (Romans 8:9), ***"A coming"*** (1 Corinthians 1:7), ***"a revealing"*** (2 Thessalonians 1:7), and ***"an appearing"*** (1 Peter 1:7).

Therefore, the Bible, the Divine Word of God, is God Almighty's way of unveiling His plans and purposes for all of mankind to read, contemplate and understand.

***The Book of Revelation is in fact history being written before it comes to pass.***

As we study significant parts of God's word, we will be continually challenged to review our present positions and relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and His Holy Spirit. This will be a **significant challenge** for many of us.


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Notice that the first four (4) letters of the word "significant" is ***sign***. I trust that as you study this module you will be challenged to go back and study God's Word and identify the many ***signs*** and ***wonders*** that are revealed to us through His Word and by the revelations of His Holy Spirit.

Therefore, through this divine revelation may there be a subsequent transformation within your spirits to the things of God, ***because transformation cannot occur without there first being a revelation from God.***

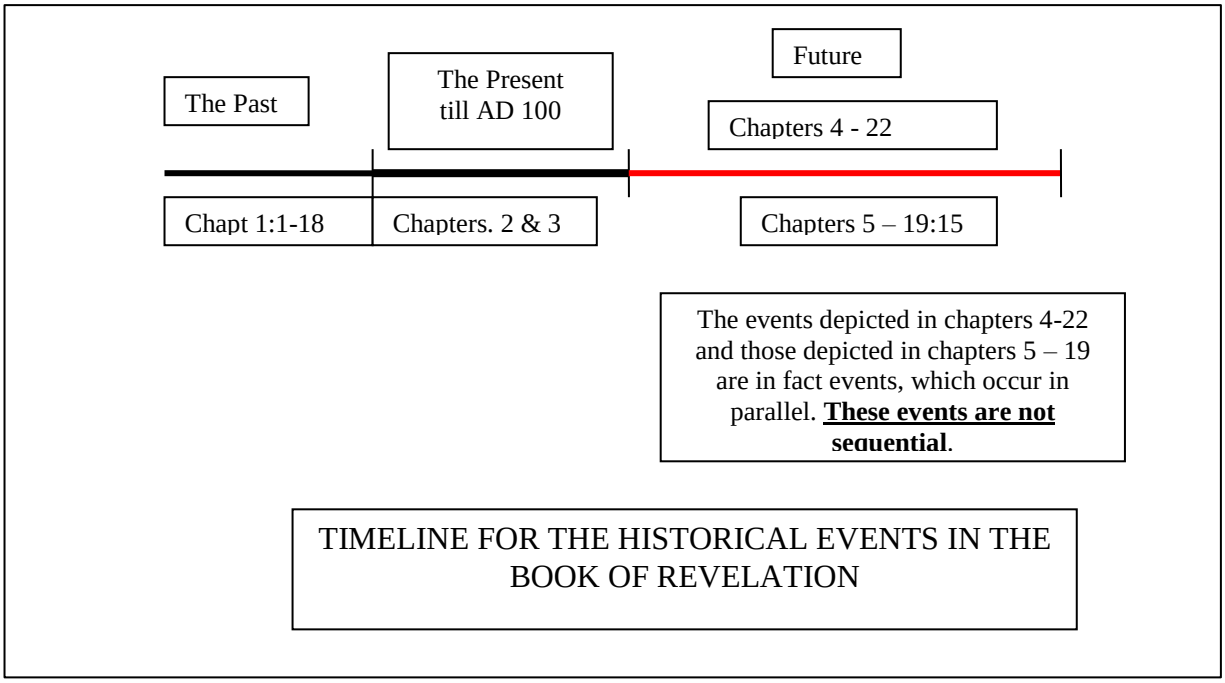
## WHO WROTE THIS BOOK?

Before we look at the seven churches themselves, let us try to find out on whose authority the book was written, and for what purpose, and to whom.

The author of the book of Revelations is clearly defined in Rev. 1:1. ***It is the divine Word of Jesus Christ Himself***, *sent down to Apostle John, by an angel,* to record it for all time, for us, the churches in Asia and for all churches, of all denominations, in all the countries of the world (for all generations).

The writer was Apostle John and the book is thought to have been written in AD 90-100, some 60 years after the ascension of Jesus Christ our Lord into Heaven. It was written whilst John was in exile on the Isle of Patmos, for continuing to preach the gospel, after he had been forbidden by the laws of that land in Ephesus at that time. At this time, He is the only remaining disciple alive who was with Jesus and was an eye witness to the miracles and teachings given by Jesus during His ministry time here on earth.

It is a series of several visions, some which tell about the past, some about the present (at AD 100) and some about future events, which will take place before the return to earth of Jesus Christ, in all His glory, to sit on the throne, on earth of His new earthly kingdom.




The Book of Revelation have some very special points, which the serious Bible student must be aware of, namely;

a) The book of Revelations is the only book in the Bible which contains promises of blessings for pastors who read the text of this book aloud in the congregations of the saints. Imagine that, God has given His word, that any pastor who reads from this book to His congregation will receive a blessing. Secondly any member of his congregation who hears these words and does them will also receive a blessing from the Lord. Therefore it is wrong for pastors not to read from this book to their congregations, because if they refuse they are selfishly preventing members of their congregations from receiving blessings from God.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b) The book of Revelations promises blessings to all people who hear the Word and PUT IT INTO PRACTISE in their individual lives.

c) The number 7 (God's perfect number) is the ruling number in this book. e.g. :-

7 candlesticks, 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 thunders, 7 vials, 7 spirits, 7 stars, 7 "no mores".

d) The closing chapters of Revelations, contains a striking contrast to the opening chapters of Genesis. Genesis speaks of the creation of the sun, the entrance of sin into the life of man and into the world, the curse pronounced upon the ground, satan's triumph in being given authority over all things, on the earth, by man (not by God). The exclusion of man from the "tree of life".

e) On the other hand, the book of Revelations tells of a place where there will be no need of the sun, (the sun will not shine), all sin will be banished, no more curses upon the earth, because there will be a new earth, satan shall be overthrown, admission of men once again to the "tree of life".

We see in Rev. 1:9, the testimony of John, as to why he was in exile, on the Isle of Patmos, banished for preaching the Word of God, the proof of which is Jesus Christ. I challenge each of the people reading this Module and studying the seven churches, to ask yourself the following question:-

If the Government of the country you belong to, or reside in at present, were to issue a new law, forbidding you to preach, proclaim, or believe in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and they boarded up the front doors of the churches, would you still be prepared to proclaim that you are a Christian ???

What if the penalty was banishment from your home to an island somewhere out in the Andaman Sea, or into the Pacific Ocean, would you, as an individual, be prepared to continue to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, no matter what the consequences to you might be, or what the punishment might entail to you and/or your family???

What about all of you "TV Evangelists" ?? Would you arrange to have "pirate TV stations" set up and still proclaim the Gospel, without fear of persecution and destruction of all your assets ??? How would you (as individuals) re-act to such a proclamation, if it was issued ???

A lot of you have just thought, it will never happen, what a crazy question, it does not concern me, but in each case you will be WRONG, because these questions will define your attitude to Christ and His Word.

We see even though Apostle John was placed into this situation, described above, it does not change his attitude to the Lord, or His teachings, as we see John, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, being borne up into the spiritual realm, to be given divine revelation from the Lord Himself, to record for our later spiritual growth and well being.

The glorious thing about the book of Revelation is that despite the isolation of John, from the world, by a worldly law, **John is not isolated from God**.

This clearly proves that the Lord cares for and guides His obedient children, wherever they are on this earth, (or even up in the spaceships circling around it), nothing is too difficult for Him, when it comes to showing His love for His people.

John hears divine instructions to write down all he sees (visions) and hears (revelation) in a book, just like the instructions given by God to the Old Testament Prophets.

John is told to send it to the seven churches, named by the Lord in Asia at that time. Upon hearing the voice, John turns around to see a being, in the image of the description recorded by Daniel the prophet, in Dan. 7:13-15, and recognizes the Lord Himself. To make sure that John is not mistaken, in identifying who is talking to Him, we have the verbal confirmation of the vision in Rev. 1:18.

***"I AM, living in the eternity of the eternities. I died, but see, I AM alive for evermore, and I possess the keys of death and Hades (hell)".***


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Jesus clearly confirms who He is (I AM) and then He makes a statement which must be fully understood. Jesus says :- ***"I possess the keys of hell".***

Many Christians, who have not studied their Scriptures thoroughly, believe that the keys were given to Peter, but the Lord Himself says in the Book of Revelation, some 60 years after His resurrection, ***"I POSSESS THE KEYS OF HELL".***

Does this mean that Jesus gave the keys to Peter and then took them back again ? No!. He never gave them to Peter in the first place. This misunderstanding has been because of the translation of the two Greek words 'Petra' and 'Petros'. One meaning pebble, (small stone) and the other meaning giant rock (like the rock of Gibraltar).

Jesus Christ is the Giant rock, whilst Peter is the very small insignificant pebble. I prefer to have my faith for the church built on the giant rock (Christ), not the small insignificant pebble (Peter).

In Rev. 1:20, Jesus explains to John, the various meanings of the symbols he is seeing - now that he has been transported into the spiritual realm.

Note:

*Do you realise that we have the same spirit living in us as did Apostle John? Do you realise that we can also be taken up, "in the Spirit" into heaven and experience similar events that were experienced by John? It is possible, if we are earnestly desiring to become close to God and want to do His will in all things.*

As we commence to study the messages sent to the seven churches, we should also understand the meaning of each of these symbols referred to in these visions of John.

***1. Seven Stars***

The seven stars are the seven angels, one assigned to each church identified in the vision. Do you realize that **God has appointed a special messenger angel to speak to YOUR church ?** Do you realize that each church has an individual angel to report to God, the activities of its congregation and to give messages to the church, (via an acceptable receptive vessel, if anyone is attuned by the Holy Spirit) and the church is prepared to listen?

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

***2. Seven Lampstands***

The seven Lampstands are identified as the seven churches, to whom the messages from the Lord were to be sent. This means that your individual church is a lampstand before the Lord. How bright this lampstand shines, depends on the individual candles (the individual Christian brothers and sisters who belong to that church body) whether they are alight, smouldering only, or completely gone out.

It is interesting to notice in the Scripture of Rev. 1:13, that the image of Jesus is IN THE CENTRE OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS. This means that JESUS IS THE CENTRE OF THEIR ATTENTION.

It is important for us to recognize that JESUS CHRIST SHOULD BE THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION IN OUR CHURCHES ALSO.

The other point to recognize in the placement of the churches around Jesus Christ, as the central figure, is to understand that all their attention is directed towards Him and is not distracted by things of the world, (or things going on in other churches around them), but that they concentrate and look directly upon His face.

When Jesus Christ as the central figure, it is more difficult for satan to get the attention of the believers, because he is BEHIND THEM and that is where Jesus said satan should always be.


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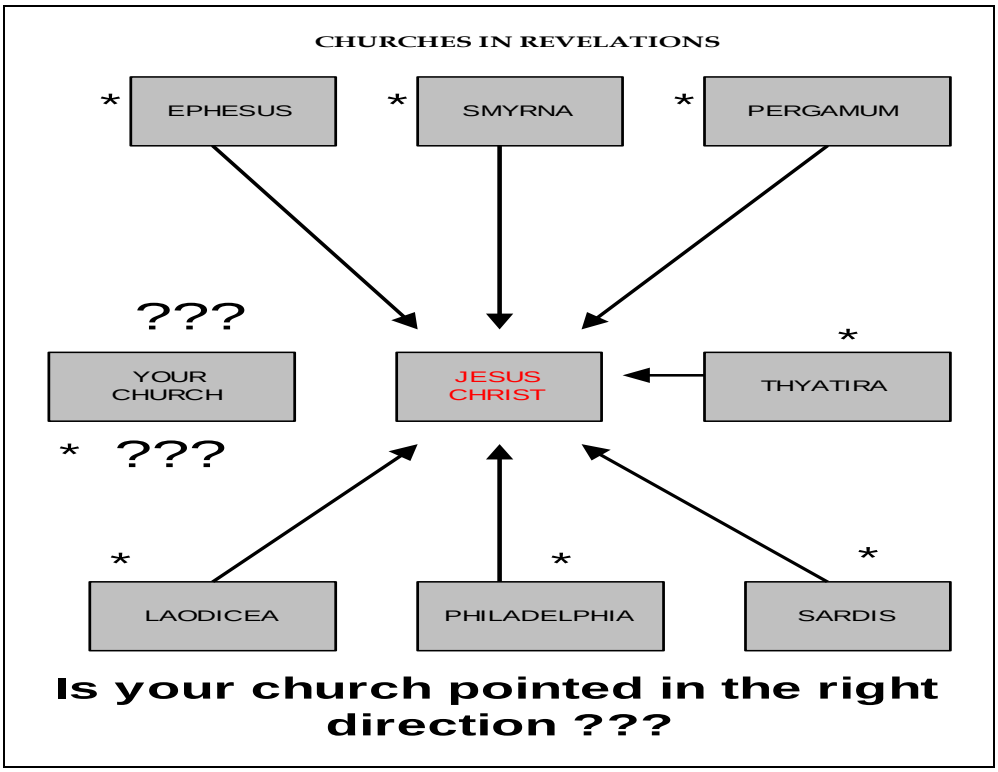


It is recognized by theological scholars today, that the seven churches referred to by Jesus, were not only the seven physical churches referred to by name in the Scriptures, but are also the seven **CHURCH TYPES**, which would appear and exist throughout the "Age of the Gentiles", prior to Christ's return for His chosen people, and so we are to be AWARE that these church types COULD and DO EXIST TODAY.

You will see in the previous diagram that I have added an extra angel and an extra church and called it **"YOUR CHURCH".**

During this chapter, we will examine each of the church messages and then I will leave it up to yourself (and God) to allocate the score for your church, wherever you are.

Remember you maybe able to fool me, or somebody else with your score, but you can't fool God with it, so I urge you to take this matter very seriously, as we now look at the first church, the church of Ephesus.(reference Rev. 2:1-7)

**CHURCH AT EPHESUS**

**GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | GOOD POINT FOUND BY JESUS |
|---|---|
| 1 | INDUSTRY |
| 2 | ACTIVITIES |
| 3 | LABORIOUS TOIL |
| 4 | PATIENT ENDURANCE |
| 5 | NO CORRUPT MEN |
| 6 | TESTS ALL TEACHINGS |
| 7 | PROCLAIM CHRIST ALWAYS |
| 8 | HATE THE NICOLAITANS |


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**CHURCH AT EPHESUS**

**BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | BAD POINT FOUND BY JESUS |
|---|---|
| 1 | ABANDONED FIRST LOVE WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST - CHURCH IS GETTING COLD |
| 2 | FALLEN FROM ORIGINAL HEIGHTS AND LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST |

CHURCH AT EPHESUS

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS STATED BY JESUS CHRIST

TO GET BACK INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

| ITEM | CORRECTIVE ACTIONS STATED BY JESUS |
|---|---|
| 1 | REMEMBER YOUR FIRST LOVE - WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST |
| 2 | REPENT OF YOUR SINS - ASK FORGIVENESS FROM GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST |
| 3 | CHANGE YOUR INNER WILL - CLEANSE YOUR HEART FROM UNRIGHTEOUSNESS |
| 4 | TURN BACK TO GOD |
| 5 | FOLLOW HIS CHOSEN PATH |

CHURCH AT EPHESUS

PROMISES TO ALL REPENTANT BELIEVERS
IN THIS CHURCH

| ITEM | PROMISES IF YOU REPENT |
|---|---|
| 1 | GOD PROMISES THAT ALL REPENTANT BELIEVERS SHALL EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. THESE PEOPLE ARE PROMISED ETERNAL LIFE FOREVER WITH JESUS CHRIST - IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD THE FATHER. |

CHURCH AT EPHESUS

CONSEQUENCES TO THOSE
WHO DO NOT REPENT OF THEIR SINS IN THIS CHURCH

| ITEM | CONSEQUENCES IF YOU DON'T REPENT OF YOUR SINS |
|---|---|
| 1 | JESUS WILL VISIT YOU PERSONALLY AND REMOVE THE LAMPSTAND FROM YOUR CHURCH. THE LIGHT WILL BE EXTINGUISHED. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL DEPART FROM THE CHURCH, AND ALL BELIEVERS WHO DO NOT REPENT SHALL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. |


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In today's world, one would think that a church doing all these "**GOOD DEEDS"** would be acceptable to God, as it:- Preaches, Teaches, Tests the Word of God, etc.

But in the **EYES OF JESUS CHRIST**, who is given ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH, **this is not enough !!!**

The fact that this is a church, which has started to grow cold in its spiritual walk with the Lord, **is enough to exclude it from Heaven.**

But we see that **God is MERCIFUL**. He does not leave the finding of the corrective actions, or solutions to us. He gives us the ingredients to correct each individual believer in the Ephesus, (or spiritually dying church). Jesus leaves the decision on whether to change or not up to each individual believer.

It is not the responsibility of the pastor, or the elders anymore, **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER IN THE CHURCH, TO REPENT AND TURN BACK TO GOD AND GOD'S CHOSEN PATHWAY, FOR THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN.**

As John the Baptist exhorted the Jews to repent of their sins and turn from their wicked ways (as individuals) and be baptised, so the Holy Spirit is exhorting the individuals in this church to do the same; return to their first love.

Let us now move on to look at the Scriptures and the special message sent to the next church, the church of Smyrna. (Reference Rev. 2:8-11)

**CHURCH AT SMYRNA**

**GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS |
|---|---|
| 1 | GOOD POINTS TO NOTE AND TO PUT INTO PRACTISE EVERY DAY |
| 2 | SUFFERED AFFLICTIONS, DISTRESS, TROUBLES, POVERTY. |
| 3 | WERE SLANDERED AND REVILED BY FALSE CHRISTIANS |
| 4 | PROCLAIMED GOD'S WORD UNDER ALL CONDITIONS - EVEN UNDER THE THREAT OF TORTURE AND DEATH BY THE LEGAL AUTHORITIES OF THAT DAY AND AGE. |

**CHURCH AT SMYRNA**

**PROMISES TO STEADFAST BELIEVERS**

**WHO BELONG TO THIS CHURCH**

| ITEM | PROMISES TO STEADFAST BELIEVERS BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | PROMISED THE CROWN OF LIFE IN HEAVEN AT THE TIME OF JUDGEMENT. |
| 2 | NO INJURY BY THE SECOND DEATH. GOD PROMISES |

The church of Smyrna is a very special church. It has afflictions, distress, pressing troubles and poverty. It has been reviled and slandered against, by "so called Christians", who were really backsliders, again under the domination and power of satan.

The people had been tortured, thrown into prison and even killed, because they continued to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. All of these things did not cause their faith to begin to crumble, because it was securely anchored to the giant rock of salvation, Jesus Christ Himself.

As we study this church we see that when we commit our lives to Jesus Christ, our PHYSICAL LIVES are no longer of any value, (if we try to keep them). It only becomes of value to us if we are prepared to


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offer it up as a sacrifice to Him, not worrying about the physical pain or troubles, but being determined to preach God's Word wherever we go, despite the consequences[14].

The other important thing to notice about this church type is that, **in the eyes of Jesus Christ**, this church, and all the believers who are in it, they are acceptable to Him. **It has no faults. !!!!!**

**Conclusion** :- The church of Smyrna is an acceptable church type, in the eyes of God, but not all Christians have the faith, nor the spiritual maturity, to be able to trust the Lord completely, in the times described above, that this church had to face.

**But all of us - SHOULD BE ABLE TO PASS THE TEST OF THIS CHURCH TYPE, IF WE REALLY WANT TO GLORIFY GOD IN OUR DAILY LIVES.**

So far, we have examined two church types and the score is :-

- One church for satan
- One church for God

Quite surprising so far, but let us continue the study and see if we can get a better score by the time we have studied all seven churches.

The next church is the church at Pergamum, (Reference Rev. 2:12- 17)

**CHURCH AT PERGAMUM**

**GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Living in Satan's city – but not part of Satan's activities.** |
| 2 | **Holding fast to Christ in all situations and under all conditions.** |
| 3 | **Not denying the faith - even to prevent torture and death.** |
| 4 | **Martyrs among you - People who are ready to die for the gospel.** |

**CHURCH AT PERGAMUM**

**BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Some teach things of the world (false doctrines.)** |
| 2 | **Some teach eating food set before Idols.** |
| 3 | **Some practising sexual acts which are contrary to God's Word.** |
| 4 | **Others are teaching wrong doctrines from the Courts of the NICOLAITANS - the ones who corrupt the people.** |

**CHURCH AT PERGAMUM**

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS SPECIFIED BY JESUS CHRIST**

[14] As a missionary I have had personal experiences to these events, having been beaten, falsely accused, put into prison and had my father-in-law (a pastor for more than 30 years) beaten to death by people who oppose Jesus Christ – the Taliban.


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| ITEM | CORRECTIVE ACTIONS DEMANDED BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **REPENT - Change your will and attitude to God - or Jesus Christ will come and fight against you with the sword of truth and you will not be able to stand against the attack from God.** |

**CHURCH AT PERGAMUM**

**PROMISES TO OVERCOMERS BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | PROMISES TO OVERCOMERS BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Eat Hidden Food ( Heavenly Manna)** |
| 2 | **Given a white stone with a new name written upon it.** |
| 3 | **No-one understands the name - except those who receive it.** |

**CHURCH AT PERGAMUM**

**CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO DON'T REPENT**

| ITEM | CONSEQUENCES FOR ALL WHO DON'T ACT ON GOD'S WORD |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Jesus shall destroy the church with the sword.** |
| 2 | **He will not allow it to stand and be a bad witness for Him.** |
| 3 | **All who are destroyed shall no enter the Kingdom at the time of the eternal judgement of all mankind.** |

The church type of Pergamum, is unfortunately like many churches in the world today, they do not bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, in their present form.

You may consider this a strong critical statement, but let us look at the facts. I will leave the Holy Spirit to prompt you in your decision, as to the correctness of my comments.

First of all within this church there were divisions, [**NO UNITY]** with some spiritually mature Christians trying to follow the Word of God. In addition to this, we had some of the newer believers (and some of the older ones) still clinging to traditions from worldly situations, which is contrary to God's Word.

When we become "born again" believers, the Word says we become new creatures, old things (all of them) pass away.

The church also had some people teaching doctrine which was contrary to the Word of God and trying to encourage the believers to eat food which had been offered to idols and/or other gods.

There were also in the midst of the congregation, people who were practising corruption. All of these things were wrong in the eyes of the Lord. (and it still is today)

The following things are important to note about this church type and the warning given by Jesus to the believers who belong to this church.

**This warning should prompt some action from all of us.**

First of all, Jesus identifies that there are "good Christians" and "bad Christians" attending the same church.

We know that light and darkness cannot mix, nor can sweet water and salt water come out of the same well, at the same time.

Therefore, we would expect that the Lord would recommend some sort of separation process, (if we use secular logic) to protect the "good Christians" whilst the Lord dealt with the "bad Christians" in the congregation.


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**But that is not the case, that is not the way that Jesus deals with His followers.**

Jesus said if the WHOLE CHURCH DID NOT REPENT (good and bad Christians alike) then Jesus would come and fight against them with the sword of His mouth, which we know is the Word of Truth.

Jesus considers that the 'good Christians' are just as guilty as the 'bad Christians', because the 'good Christians' failed to test the Word being preached and when it was determined that it was incorrect teaching, they FAILED TO ACT AND HAVE THE TEACHING STOPPED.

Also the 'good Christians' FAILED TO STOP THE CORRUPTION, which was obviously apparent in the church congregation, or in the worldly situation around them.

This is a very important lesson for the Church body at large to realize. In the eyes of Jesus Christ, you cannot be judged blameless if you become one of the 'silent majority' who is not involved themselves, in the wrongdoing, but DO NOTHING ABOUT HAVING IT STOPPED.

Jesus considers inactivity, to not correct (take action against) something that is wrong, as a sin and **all are collectively guilty** (both the "good Christians and the "bad Christians) for allowing the sin to remain in existence.

To the churches in AUSTRALIA, this comment is very relevant. For over 200 years the churches have been building up barriers among the congregation, not removing false teaching and some traditional practises (from the worldly point of view) from within their congregations.

These stumbling blocks have prevented the Holy Spirit from being able to move in the midst of the COLLECTIVE CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA, because of jealousy, pride, envy, competition, accusation of 'sheep stealing', corruption in the land, etc, which has been allowed to remain by the Church at large, the Body of Christ..

I challenge the COLLECTIVE CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA, to consider the judgement of Jesus Christ upon the church of Pergamum. He has stated that He shall come and fight against you (Jesus shall fight against you personally) with the sword of truth.

We all know that nobody has ever been able to defeat Jesus Christ in a spiritual battle. Even satan, who is far greater than us, (in spiritual terms) was unable to win in his several and continual battles against Jesus.

We are told to quote the Word against satan and he shall flee from us. This indicates how powerful the Word really is. If Jesus Christ uses that same Word against us, then we will surely be destroyed, not just the 'bad Christians' but also the 'good Christians' who were part of the silent majority who did not do anything to correct the situation and bring the churches into unity under the sovereign reign of Jesus Christ.

**Remember 2 Chronicles 7:14**

I will leave you to pray to Jesus Christ for forgiveness, and to ask the Holy Spirit to identify the things which needs to be corrected in the churches, so that the 'good Christians' are not destroyed along with the 'bad Christians'.

But now we have looked at three churches and the score is :-

- 2 churches for satan
- 1 church for God

Let us continue the study and see if the score can get any worse. All along you have thought that everything was going to be OK once you became a Christian. Well maybe now you will start to think being a Christian is not as easy as you first thought, if you start to use the eyes of Jesus Christ, as the judge of what is right and what is wrong.

Let us now look carefully at the fourth church, the Church of Thyatira. (Reference Rev. 2:18-29)


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**CHURCH AT THYATIRA**

**GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | Good Works, Love, Patience, Endurance. |
| 2 | Works increasing day by day. |
| 3 | Testing the teachings of the Saints |
| 4 | Rejecting the false teachings and the false teachers who give it. |

**CHURCH AT THYATIRA**

**BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | Church is divided between followers of true and false teachings. |
| 2 | False Prophetess teaching false Doctrines. |
| 3 | Elders inactive - Do not stop false teaching in the assembly by the Prophetess. |
| 4 | Christian Babies led astray by false teachings of the false Prophetess. |
| 5 | Lack of checking by the Church Leaders and the Congregation. |

**CHURCH AT THYATIRA**

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TOLD BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR THE SAINTS IN THIS CHURCH |
|---|---|
| 1 | REPENT OF PAST SINS - Turn back to God for forgiveness. |
| 2 | Check all Doctrines taught in the Assembly |
| 3 | Remove all false prophets from the assembly. |
| 4 | Teach Correct Doctrine. If it can't be found in the Word - don't teach it at all. |
| 5 | Protect and Recover the "Babes in Christ". |
| 6 | Test all future Words given in the Assembly. |
| 7 | If it does not line up with the Word of God - then reject it all. |


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**CHURCH AT THYATIRA**

**PROMISES GIVEN BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | PROMISES FOR THOSE WHO OBEY IN THIS CHURCH |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Reward each as you deserve - check your attitudes also.** |
| 2 | **No added trials for those who tested the Word and rejected it.** |
| 3 | **Hold fast to what you have till I come for my chosen people.** |

**CHURCH AT THYATIRA**

**CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO DON'T REPENT**

| ITEM | CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO DON'T REPENT |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Some souls to be lost - to cleanse the Body of Christ.** |
| 2 | **Wrongdoers given no second chance - all are destroyed.** |
| 3 | **Jesus removes the unholy by elimination to protect the holy from contamination.** |

From the tables it is very easy to see that this church type has a problem, in that the church has allowed wrong teaching to continue in the church, **for some time**, **without taking steps to remove it and teach the correct Word, from the Scriptures**.

Some of the believers have remembered Apostle Paul's warning to the Church at Ephesus and have carefully tested the teachings from the 'so-called' apostles and have found that the teachings did not line up with the Word of God and as a result, they have rejected the teachings and the men who teach them.

Unfortunately, the mature Christians, upon identifying the false teachers and the false prophetess, did not take the necessary steps to **REMOVE THEM FROM THE CHURCH BODY**, which is the correct action, as stated in the Word.

The result was that some of the "babies in Christ" were led astray by the false teachers, and the Words of the false prophetess. **Jesus says that this lead towards destruction !!!**

***It appears from the account in the Book of Revelations, that the Lord must have sent many messages in prophecy to the church, identifying that there was false teaching taking place, to warn the church to take some positive action, to remove the people concerned, but alas the church elders, the church pastors and the mature Christians in the congregation did nothing.***

The promises and consequences for this church are things we should be happy about (on the one hand) and sad about (on the other).

For the people who recognized the wrong doctrine in the church, and refused to follow it, Jesus promised that they would not receive additional trials in their earthly lives, but that they must hold fast to what they already have (their salvation and their faith) until the Lord comes back for His bride.

Jesus goes on to tell John that He has given the false prophetess plenty of time to change her ways, but that she has hardened her heart and refused to repent of her sins, so it is logical that she should be destroyed, given over to the desires of her heart, given over to satan and eternal damnation. But what about the poor young babies that were led astray by her???


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You would think that they should be now awakened to the truth of the wrong teachings and be given a chance to repent and turn back to Jesus Christ.

We see in this example, both the justice and the mercy of God at work. ***The young babies in Christ, are given one last chance to repent and turn back to God.*** All who fail to listen to this warning are then to be destroyed along with the false prophetess and her teachers.

All throughout the Bible, the Word clearly commands us to be the "HOLIEST PEOPLE ON EARTH". The judgement upon this church is that, like the bad hand, or bad eye, which was to be cut off, to save the remainder. (ref. Matt. 18:8-9)

Jesus will "cut off the bad part of the church", to stop the pollution of the Word from spreading.

**JESUS IS PREPARED TO ALLOW SOME SOULS TO BE LOST, TO KEEP THE BODY OF CHRIST PURE & HOLY & ACCEPTABLE TO HIM.** This is the reference to names being removed from the Lamb's Book of Life.

If we, as Christians, do not guard against the "watering down" or "polluting of the Word" in our assemblies, then the Lord will act to remove these offenders, by ELIMINATION.

So after studying four churches, the score is :-

- 3 churches for satan
- 1 church for God.

Let us move on to study the fifth church in the series and see what God has, as instructions for correction, in this specific church type.

**CHURCH AT SARDIS**
**GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Still a few souls who have not soiled their clothes with sin - who are still worthy of keeping their names in the Lamb's Book of Life.** |
| 2 | **These people are the only people who are acceptable to Christ in this church, to keep their salvation until eternity.** |

**CHURCH AT SARDIS**
**BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS |
|---|---|
| 1 | ***JESUS WILL TREAT THIS CHURCH LIKE UNBELIEVERS !!!*** |
| 2 | **He will come upon them like a thief in the night and steal away their salvation - their promised eternal life.** |
| 3 | **Jesus no longer thinks of this as a Christian Church anymore.** |

**CHURCH AT SARDIS**
**CORRECTIVE ADVICE GIVEN BY JESUS CHRIST**


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| ITEM | CORRECTION TO BECOME RESTORED TO CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Arouse yourself from Spiritual sleep.** |
| 2 | **Keep Spiritually Awake.** |
| 3 | **Strengthen and liven up your faith.** |
| 4 | **Revise the lessons you have heard.** |
| 5 | **Keep them in your mind & in your heart.** |
| 6 | **Obey them at all times.** |
| 7 | **Do works worthy of repentance.** |
| 8 | **Start a record of works worthy of mention in Heaven.** |

**CHURCH AT SARDIS**
**PROMISES TO THE RIGHTEOUS ONES**

| ITEM | PROMISES BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **People who are judged worthy by Jesus Christ shall wear white robes and their names shall remain in the Lamb's Book of Life.** |
| 2 | **Their names shall be proclaimed openly in Heaven.** |

**CHURCH AT SARDIS**
**CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO DON'T REPENT OF THEIR SINS**

| ITEM | CONSEQUENCES PROMISED BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Jesus Christ shall come upon them like a thief in the night.** |
| 2 | **He shall remove their names from the Lamb's Book of Life.** |
| 3 | **They shall loose their salvation and go into eternal damnation.** |

In studying this church you may have been surprised to see that Jesus threatens to remove a person's name from the Lamb's Book of Life, because the person's clothes had become soiled, with his disobedience and his sinful nature.

Many Christians believe that **"ONCE SAVED IS ALWAYS SAVED". Well unfortunately that is <u>not what the Scripture says</u>.**

In Rev. 3:4-5 Jesus makes the statement that there are still a few who have not soiled their clothes.... <u>and I will NOT erase their names from the Book of Life.</u>

This means that to qualify in keeping your name in the Book of Life, you must not soil your clothes, you must remain in accordance with the Word of God at all times, regularly examining your position before God and repent of any disobedience or misdoing's, so as to remain righteous before the Lord (at all times).

Another way of looking at this statement, is as recorded in John 15:16. In this Scripture, Jesus says that you did not choose Him, He in fact chose you and ordained you, that you should go out and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain (PERFECT). If your fruit does not remain, or goes bad, then you are no longer worthy to keep your name in the lamb's book of life.

In using this definition of worthiness, it is necessary to challenge every pastor, in every church, across every land.

In Matt. 18:12, Jesus makes mention of the shepherd with 100 sheep in the flock, under his love, guidance and responsibility. These are the "fruit" that he is to "take care of", until Jesus returns for His bride.


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We know today that from time to time, some of the "sheep" wander back into the world, following after their "previous shepherd", which is satan.

In discussing this problem with pastors in many different countries, I have been given all sorts of EXCUSES, (but called statistics), that it is normal for approximately 10-20% of all believers to fall away, during the first year of their salvation.

They have said, in affect, that they are prepared to allow 20% of their fruit to drop to the ground, to rot and die. I would suggest that they ask themselves why Jesus Christ said that they are to leave the 99 sheep and go out and find **AND BRING BACK THE SHEEP THAT WAS LOST**. Why did Jesus Christ say that ??

If Jesus Christ said that they should do it, then I would humbly suggest that some pastors better change their attitudes to their "retention factors", and instead of accepting an 80% retention factor, they better get back into the Word and go for the 100% that is required of them, so that their garments shall not be considered soiled and their names shall not be removed from the Lamb's Book of Life, like is written for the Church of SARDIS.

**So after 5 churches, the score is :-**

- 4 churches for satan
- 1 church for God

Many pastors, upon reading what I have just written, may try to brush this off as a wives tale, or just another mad author, trying to make a fast dollar. I write it to turn people back to the Scriptures and back to the Lord. You may think whatever you like of me, but I challenge you to check the score.

We have examined five churches so far, only one of them has been acceptable to the Lord, without any correction.

Remember, He (the Lamb of God) is the ultimate judge, you have to convince Him of your worthiness -- not me.

Now let us move on to church number six, the church of Philadelphia and see what the Lord considers is good, or bad in this church.

**CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA**
**GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Works are acceptable** |
| 2 | **Power used wisely.** |
| 3 | **Test all teachings** |
| 4 | **The church has not renounced the name of Jesus Christ.** |
| 5 | **Shown "Agape Love" in all situations, even during trial and tribulations.** |
| 6 | **The church is acceptable to God.** |

**CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA**
**PROMISES GIVEN BY JESUS CHRIST FOR THIS CHURCH**

| ITEM | PROMISES GIVEN FOR THIS CHURCH BY JESUS CHRIST |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Jesus places an open door in front of this church, which cannot be closed by satan or any of his agents.** |
| 2 | **Saints kept from the trials which will come at the "end-time".** |
| 3 | **Hold fast to their treasures, the crown of eternal life.** |
| 4 | **Made to be a pillar in the Heavenly City with a new name.** |


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We have some good news, when studying the Church of Philadelphia, for it is clear that in the eyes of God, **this church type is acceptable to Him**:- shout HALLELUIAH!!!.

In the eyes of God - not man, the work of this church is deemed to be acceptable. Even though the church had little power, it has used it wisely to glorify the Lord. The church was very conscious that false teachings could creep into the Body of Christ and so they tested EVERY TEACHING AND EVERY DOCTRINE, to ensure that it was in accordance with the Scriptures.

Neither the church as a whole, nor the individual believers, renounced or denied the Lord's name at anytime. The Lord emphasizes that this church ENDURED PATIENTLY their trials and hardships, according to the lessons taught them by Jesus and the Apostles.

This means they endured their trials and tribulations with love for one another, both for the believers and for the unbelievers alike. They were not complainers, gossipers, liars, or people who caused division in the churches, etc., but at all times, by their words and their actions, they showed and manifested the agape love, which is the true sign of a mature Christian.

The promises given by the Lord for this church are worthy of note also, as they must make us examine our own thinking and attitudes.

First of all Jesus promises that in front of this church God has placed a door and this door is open forever. No-one on earth can shut the door before this church – not even satan!.

Secondly, all of the false teachers, which have been identified in the other churches so far, will be required to bow down at the feet of the saints of the church of Philadelphia and acknowledge that Jesus has loved these saints.

Thirdly, the saints of this church are told they will not suffer the hour of testing, which is to come upon the world, indicating that the saints of the church of Philadelphia shall be guaranteed a place in the rapture when Jesus comes back for His children.

As encouragement, Jesus tells the saints of this church to HOLD FAST TO THE TREASURE THAT THEY HAVE, so no-one can rob them of their crown ( which by right, already belongs to them).

For those people who do hold fast, they shall have written on them, the name of God, (for their protection), become the pillars in the new city and receive the new name of Jesus Christ.

Many Christians do not realize that after Jesus Christ comes back after the rapture, He will rule for 1,000 years and will be given a new name, as will all His worthy subjects. Even though this church did not have any faults, at the time the Scriptures were written, there is still a warning given to all the believers in this congregation.

The individual believers in this church, could loose their crowns in Heaven, if they become complacent and ceased to hold fast to the treasures they have acquired already in Heaven.

This is a warning that ALL BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT TAKE LIGHTLY. If you do not keep your fruit remaining, that is, the fruit of your repentance, your fruit of salvation, your fruits of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is given severally, as the Lord wills, (not man) then you will not be deemed acceptable, in the eyes of God, on the day of judgement and shall have to go through the **Baptism of Fire**, fire of purification, to have all the chaff burned off your spiritual body, so the remainder can be turned into the jewels by purging through the fire.

Christians therefore have to review their spiritual positions on a regular basis, to ensure that in accordance with Hebrews 6:1-3, we are continually maturing as Christians, not staying at the same level of spiritual growth, or understanding.

**In reviewing the score, we now have :-**

- 2 churches for God
- 4 churches for satan

This means that in the six churches we have examined so far, 60% of the church types are deemed not to be acceptable to God, in the form He observed them.


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To become acceptable, they all had to repent of their sins and accept the corrective actions identified in the Scriptures for each of them.

Let us examine the final church, the church of Laodicea and see how this church was rated by the Lord.

**CHURCH AT LAODICEA**

**GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST IN THIS CHURCH |
|---|---|
| 1 | ***NO GOOD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST IN THIS CHURCH !!!*** |

**CHURCH AT LAODICEA**
**BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST**

| ITEM | BAD POINTS FOUND BY JESUS CHRIST IN THIS CHURCH |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Not acceptable to the Lord, because it is a spiritual church which is not "on-fire" for the Lord.** |
| 2 | **They are not hot or cold - just lukewarm. This is a spiritual state that the Lord will not accept.** |
| 3 | **The church covets the wealth of the world, instead of the wealth of spiritual things.** |
| 4 | **This church is under the false illusion that it is acceptable - but unfortunately it is not.** |

**CHURCH AT LAODICEA**
**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FROM JESUS CHRIST**

**FOR THE LAODICEANS**

| ITEM | ALTERNATIVES FOR THE LAODICEAN CHURCH |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Unless they repent they shall be rejected by Jesus as unworthy.** |
| 2 | **If they repent, they shall sit beside Jesus in Heaven.** |
| 3 | **These are the only two choices given to this church.** |
| 4 | **It is a "take it or leave it" option. Jesus has judged them already - they just have to decide on which place they wish to be after judgement time take place in Heaven.** |

**CHURCH AT LAODICEA**
**PROMISES FROM JESUS CHRIST FOR THE LAODICEANS**


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| ITEM | PROMISES FOR THE LAODICEAN CHURCH |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Dramatically change your spiritual ways & wake up for Christ.** |
| 2 | **Provide treasures tried by temptations - treasures worthy in Heaven.** |
| 3 | **Walk in the way of righteousness to receive white robes.** |
| 4 | **Jesus chastens you and corrects you because He loves you and does not want any to perish - so repent before it is too late.** |

In the book of Colossians, 4:16, Apostle Paul instructs the people in the Church at Colossae to read the Epistle that he has sent to them and then to forward it on to the church in Laodicea, and to take the Epistle that he has written to them and bring it back and read it in the Church of Colossae. So there is an extra Epistle that was written by Apostle Paul, which is not in our Bible today, but was around at the end of the first Century Church.[15]

The church of Laodicea, is like many churches which exist today, in the developed world. It is a church which has a flashy, impressive modern building, with airconditioning, modern sophisticated electronic sound and music systems, comfortable upholstered seats, lush carpets on the floor, overhead projectors, video screens and all the other things which go with a very affluent society.

The church pastor is given a large house, compliments of the church, plus an expensive car and a high salary. He is a member of some of the best society clubs around town - and in some cases, he has some businesses on the side, (just as insurance, or to help put the children through college.)

The church appears to be very rich (and in fact in a worldly sense, it is) <u>but it is spiritually dying</u>. It resembles a selective society club, where membership is limited to the very select few, who earn high salaries, or who are relatives of someone who does.

The church gives a token offering to the poor and a token offering to the mission work of the church, but <u>the attitude is one of obligation - not because of the genuine love of God.</u>

- No-one can remember when the pastor last prayed for anyone to be healed (and a healing actually took place).
- No-one can remember when the last person made a genuine commitment to serve the Lord with **ALL of his life and his money and his talents**.

Even if they could, they would remark that “Johnny” always took his religion too seriously anyway. This is a church in definite spiritual decline. It is a church that Jesus no longer considers to be CHRISTIAN by name, as it does not glorify Christ in any of its activities.

Jesus Christ is very harsh in His judgement on this church, but for very good reason. Jesus clearly tells John that He will spit this church out of His mouth if it remains in its present state and with its present attitudes.

But we know that God is merciful, God is just and God is never changing, He is always compassionate in His ways. Jesus Christ gives this church the opportunity to repent, to change their ways and again come back to Him, like the prodigal son.

In Rev. 3:20, we have the famous Scripture, where Jesus says He is waiting just outside the door to our hearts, gently knocking and waiting for us to open the door, so He can have fresh and continual communion with us. This clearly shows the glory of God.

Despite the fact that Jesus wishes to spit this church out of His mouth, He will not do so without giving every individual believer inside the church an opportunity to once again be restored to the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

**What a great and mighty God we have HALLELUIAH !!!**

[15] For more information about the Epistle to the Church at Laodicea please read the appendix.


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So, in the church of Laodicea, we have a clear warning to all financially secure churches, who consider the appearances of their churches and the way they dress up their choir personnel, more important than the basic teachings of Acts 1:8, to spread the good news to all nations of the earth.

***Any church which does not have an outreach programme in their own city, their own country, and who do not send mission funds to assist in the spreading of the gospel, in other countries, either by financial support to their own missionaries, or to other foreign missionaries, are (in my view) guilty, in God's eyes, of falling into the category of the LAODICEAN church.***

***Any church which allows denominationalism to take precedence over the Word of God (all the Word of God -- all of the Bible) is also guilty of belonging to this category.***

**Let us now try to draw some conclusions:-**

We have examined seven churches and we arrived at the startlingly score of :-

- 2 churches for God
- 5 churches for satan

This is not what many Christians would have expected when they commenced this chapter, but the Word tells the truth of the situation, as Jesus, not man, judged those churches at that time.

In the seven churches we have studied, the message to the angel of each of the seven churches always finishes with the words :-

**"He who can hear, let him listen to and heed what the Spirit (Holy Spirit) says to the assemblies (the churches).**

This is the new testament equivalent, to the old testament command, which was given by God to each of the prophets, when giving them a message to deliver to the people of Israel. "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel".....

This message for the seven church types, is a direct message to us from the Lord and we must obey it, in the same way that we obey Acts 2:38-39, when we repent of our sins, are baptized in water and receive the Holy Spirit power into our lives.

For those churches which at present do not believe that the Holy Spirit is for this day and age, I feel sorry, because they will therefore not heed the warnings of the book of Revelations, and as such, their saints may not fall into a category which is recognized (in God's eyes) as acceptable to Him, in the last days.

The above seven church types were recognized as being in existence at the time, some 60 years after the ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven.

But this warning is given to us, so that we, as individual churches today, would not fall into some of the pitfalls and traps those early churches did.

Therefore we as individual churches, must examine ourselves in the light of the points identified for all the previous churches and identify (TRUTHFULLY) where we, as individual churches stand.

The following table is recommended as a checklist, to identify where your individual church stands, in relation to the points identified as being, for or against, each of the individual seven church types studied.

If you identify any points which God has previously identified as being not acceptable, then the obvious solution is also to identify **GOD'S REMEDY FOR ITS CORRECTION**, so that the church can again be found acceptable in God's sight.

After completing the checklist table for the church, (collectively) then each individual Christian should then examine the **SAME LIST FOR HIS OWN SPIRITUAL SITUATION** and follow **THE SAME SET OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**.

In concluding this study I trust that every person has been challenged to have a careful look at their particular church, their teachings and organization and in addition reflect on their own personal positions and relationships firstly to the Lord and then to other members of the Body of Christ.


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# SPIRITUAL CHECK LIST

# for

# INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES

# And

# INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS

***


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**SUBJECT NAME: THE WRITINGS OF JOHN**
**AQF CODE: CTTNBC-005**
**COURSE HOURS: 40**

| ITEM | YOUR CHURCH [YES/NO] | YOU AS A CHRISTIAN [YES/NO] |
|---|---|---|
| Is Jesus the centre of all the attention in your church ? | | |
| Is your church involved with activities which help people of different ethnic backgrounds all over the world ? | | |
| Does your church patiently endure under unrighteous attacks, both from within and/or outside the church body ? | | |
| Does your church tolerate wicked men inside or outside the church body ? | | |
| Does your church test the teachings and prophecies, in accordance with the Word and expel the false teachers and prophets when you find their teaching does not line up with the Word of God ? | | |
| Does your church proclaim Christ and Christian principles in all situations ? | | |
| Does your church hate corruption and do they do anything about it ? | | |
| Has your church left, lost, abandoned their first love, which is Jesus Christ ? | | |
| Does your church react correctly when placed under physical and/or political pressure from inside/outside the church body ? | | |
| Is your church prepared to proclaim Jesus Christ in the face of imprisonment or even death ? | | |
| Does your church have a good record of works, produced by and through trials and strife and achieved them through the use of faith in Jesus Christ ? | | |
| Can you see : Love, faith, service, patient endurance all in operation in your church assembly ? | | |
| Does the works, through faith, increase day by day, in your church body ? | | |
| Are false teachers allowed to continue to operate in your church, in your presence, without corrective action ? | | |
| Does your church have groups, or an individual who likes to gossip about other people ? | | |
| Is the Holy Spirit Gift of Discernment operating in your church ? | | |
| Are all the Holy Spirit gifts as per 1. COR. Chapter 12, operating in your church on a regular basis ? | | |
| Are the 9 fruit flavours of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as per GAL. 5:22 operating in your church regularly ? | | |
| Does your church encourage and practise the operation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in accordance with 1. COR. Chapt. 14 ? | | |
| Does you church have elders & deacons appointed as per the book of Titus ? | | |
| Does the elders control and govern the church, or is it controlled by the pastor, as a dictator ? | | |
| If your church has "daughter" churches, do they have elders and deacons, and are they in complete control of their own daughter church, or must they get approval from the "mother" church for everything they want to do ? | | |
| Is there a bottle of oil in your church, so that an elder can anoint the sick and pray for their complete healing, as per James 5:14 ? | | |
| Does your church have altar calls for salvation ? How often ? | | |


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| ITEM | YOUR CHURCH [YES/NO] | YOU AS A CHRISTIAN [YES/NO] |
|---|---|---|
| When was the last time that someone accepted Jesus Christ in your church ? | | |
| Does your church call for people to receive the Holy Spirit into their lives ? | | |
| How often does this happen ? | | |
| Does your church encourage the believers to be baptized by total immersion in water ? How often do these baptismal services take place ? | | |
| Does you church emphasize that your church should be Holy ? | | |
| Is your church Holy ? | | |
| Does your church take positive steps to make sure that it remains Holy all the time ? | | |
| Does your church preach that your fruit must remain, as per the words in John 15:16 ? | | |
| What action does your church take if one believer goes out of the church ? Do you follow the instructions of Jesus, as stated in MATT. 18:12-14 ? | | |
| If the answer to the above is NO !!, do you put it down to statistics of this day and age ? just a sign of the times !!! | | |
| What percentage of people who accepted salvation, in your church, during the last 2 year period are still practising Christians today ? (either in your church or elsewhere) ? | | |
| As an individual church, has there been someone accept the salvation of Jesus Christ in your church during the last month ? | | |
| How often does this happen ? | | |
| As a believer, have you ever witnessed or led a person to accept the Lord as their personal Saviour ? | | |
| Are they (your fruit) still strong practising Christians today ? | | |
| Is your church spiritually alive and awake ? | | |
| Does your church continually strengthen and invigorate your faith into action ? | | |
| Does your church give balanced lessons and teachings in all areas of the Scriptures, or does it concentrate on one area only - like evangelism, but not give proper nurture food for all new believers ? | | |
| Is your church a growing one, or is it one that just has a constant stream of changing faces, but with approximately the same number of people in the congregation each week ? | | |
| Does your church (and church elders) practise what they preach; or are they hearers of the Word only ? | | |
| Has your church had a series of studies on the 7 churches in Revelations, before you read this Module? | | |
| Did they change anything in the church? | | |
| How often does this happen ? | | |
| Does your church consider the church buildings more important than spending money on the mission program and spreading of God's Word throughout the earth ? | | |
| Does your church, chasten, discipline, or correct its members, when they go astray from the Word of God ? | | |
| How do they do this?<br>As per what series of Scriptures? | | |


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| ITEM | YOUR CHURCH [YES/NO] | YOU AS A CHRISTIAN [YES/NO] |
|---|---|---|
| Does your church allow a marriage between a believer & a non-believer to take place on its premises ? | | |
| Does your church allow a marriage between same sex couples to take place on its premises? | | |
| Does your church have a fund for widows, to help those who are in distress, or in need in your congregation ? | | |
| How does your church select their pastor or shepherd ? | | |
| Do you place more emphasis on the person's educational skill and qualifications, or on the "fruit" of his ministry ? | | |
| Does your church participate with other churches in your town, to lift up the name of Jesus Christ higher than any other name, or do you think they are in competition with you and that they may steal your sheep ? | | |
| Doesn't all of the sheep belong to Jesus Christ, not the individual churches? | | |

As you are by now aware, it is only two of the churches which are acceptable "in God's eyes" to be able to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, in their present states.

In undertaking the Spiritual Checklist shown above, you can do it as carefully (or as carelessly) as you choose. The point you must realize is that you do not have to convince me how good your individual church is, you have to convince yourself.

Finally, God Almighty already knows the score, for both your church, and for you, as an individual Christian, so don't try to fool Him, it won't work.

If you find that you did not get a perfect score, then you need to do something about it, as only those with "perfect scores" in God's eyes will be able to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

# REVELATIONS CHAPTERS 4 (ONWARDS)

We have carefully studied **the first vision** given by Jesus to Apostle John, now let us examine the following visions which commence in Revelation Chapter 4. This is a partly veiled vision and shows the vision of God in heaven, seated upon His throne, (the creator of the universe) receiving the worship of the living creatures and the 24 elders, continually. (Rev. 4:1-11)

## The opening of the 7-sealed book:

The vision continues in Chapter 5: **The opening of the 7-sealed book** by the Lamb of God (the only one who is worthy to break the seals). ***This book is the title deed to the earth***. This is what Jesus came to earth for – this is what Jesus died for. This is expounded by the fact that all in heaven sing a new song.

V9: *And they sang a new song, saying thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals, for You were slain, and has redeemed us back to God the Father, by the blood of every kindred, tongue, people and nation*

V10: *And You have made us kings and priests unto God ; and we shall reign on the earth.*

The song is in appreciation of the fact that Christ was slain on the cross, that His precious blood was shed (1 Pet. 1:19) and that **it was shed for the entire world**. This includes Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Catholics, and Baptists, even Charismatic's and Pentecostals.


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Some Christians think they will have their own little section in heaven, all alone – well, that is not the case. There are no fences in heaven!!! God loves the whole world and all the disciples who dwell therein **will dwell in Unity before the Lord**

The choir also sings about their return with Jesus as the King of Kings (Rev. 19:11). At that time the armies of heaven will follow Him on white horses. At this point the angels in heaven also join in the praises with the saints.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that angels sing their praises. They recite their praises, whereas the Church – the Body of Christ, triumphantly sings out its glorious message in song. The angels associated with the Lord have known Him for thousands of years – they know Him as very few saints know Him. They praise the Lamb of God for 7 reasons:- (1) His power; (2) His spiritual riches; (3) His wisdom; (4) His Might; (5) His honour; (6) His glory; (7) His blessings.

Carnal Christians who refuse to bow in worship to Jesus Christ here on earth, will do so at this time. This is a fulfilment of Phil. 2:9-11. The 4 beasts and the 24 elders lead the others in their worship. They fall down on their faces before Jesus. They cannot wait to worship Him – the Lord Jesus Christ.

## The opening of the 6 seals (Chapter 6)

As we begin this chapter we have to knock away a few myths concerning some of the signs. Some sincere Christians say: *"Matthew 24:14 states that the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all the nations and then the end shall come. Since there are still some tribes who have not yet heard the Gospel therefore Jesus cannot return yet".*

Unfortunately, these people have their understanding of the signs in the wrong place. Why? Because the Rapture is a sign-less, timeless event. What relationship exists between the rapture and the prophetic signs? NONE !!! The Rapture is an evacuation of believers from the earth before the great judgement of the Tribulation Hour. Does it happen? Yes! There are several references to confirm that. It is a meeting in the Heavens of the believers with Christ – it is not Christ's return to earth.

Since Jesus first coming was **"to earth"**, His second coming must also be **"to earth".** The Rapture is not "a coming to earth" **but a meeting in the clouds**. **Seven years later, we the believers return with Christ to the earth.**

**For confirmation please do the following:-** Open one bible at Revelation chapter 6, open another Bible at the following: Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17, or Luke 21. Compare the signs found in these chapters with the signs found in Revelation: The conclusion: ***They are identical.***

**The Church is raptured in Revelation chapter 4 verse 1**, and believers (represented by the 24 elders) are placing crowns at the Saviour's feet **BEFORE** the signs and judgements of the Tribulation hour begins in chapters 6-18.

The signs (in Chapter 6) are **"Post-Rapture" and "Pre-Revelation".** The signs point to a period within the 7 years when the **TRIBULATION HOUR COMES UPON EARTH**, after we, (the saints) ***have already been taken up to be with Christ***, ready to come back to earth with Him to rule and reign for 1,000 years.

The 6 seals which are identified in Chapter 6 are warning signs for the "soon to happen" Tribulation period of 7 years.

**Vision Three: Chapter 7, verses 1-8**

Chapter 7 maybe divided into 2 sections, the first (verses 1-8) which deals with the **144,000 Israelites**, and the second section (verses 9-17) which deals with **the multitudes of the Gentiles**.

This chapter also portrays God as compassionate, merciful and loving. This is a correct portrayal of God: **because God is love** (1 Jn. 4:8) **and confirmed in** (John 3:16).


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**It is mankind's wickedness, rebellion and sin that produces judgement:**

- For the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23)
- They that plough iniquity and wickedness, reap the same (Job 4:8)

These judgements were released upon the earth because, they rebelled (and continue to rebel) for thousand of years.

But God is a merciful God. He calls "time out" to give mankind **one last chance** to turn from their wicked ways, to repent and turn back to Him, to have salvation and revival. Before the Judgement comes.

**The 144,000 Israelites:**

Verse 1 states that 4 angels stand at the 4 corners of the earth. The earth is not square, this refers to the 4 compass points of North, South, East & West. They are to administer judgement upon the earth, but God calls a halt so that the branding can take place.

**[The wicked get their seal "666" in Rev. 13: 17-18, so this does not refer to them.]**

In verses 5-8, God identifies 12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel, calling each of the tribes by name. So that there is no confusion, **this group cannot be the Church, because the church is multi-national and is not defined as "Jewish".** The church is already in heaven by this time, waiting to go back to earth with Jesus.

These 144,000 Jewish evangelists are anointed and branded by the Spirit. Joel 2:28-29 describes these spirit-filled preachers proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

We must understand here what the Holy Spirit is doing during this time and not be confused about the actions of the Holy Spirit during this important time. 2 Thessalonians verse 7 states: *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he (the Holy Spirit) now letteth will let, until he (the Holy Spirit) be taken out of the way.*

The Old English meaning for "letteth" is hinder. The picture being painted here is the rise of the Anti-Christ, but it is being hindered by the power of the Holy Spirit, until the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth and there is no longer any spiritual power to restrain the Anti-Christ. This is His restraining power only.

Now, we know that the Holy Spirit lives and abides in us, (Rom. 8:9) and (1 Cor. 3:16). His restraining power is removed from the earth – but not the Holy Spirit Himself. Why? Because the Holy Spirit is God – the third person of the Trinity. He is Omnipresent (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), and omnipresent ( everywhere at all times). Therefore the Holy Spirit is not removed from the earth, because He is in all places at all times.

David states in Psalm 139: 7-10: *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from they presence? If I ascend up into Heaven – you are there: if I make my bed in Hell, behold you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and they right hand shall hold me.*

Since the Holy Spirit is everywhere at all times, only His restraining influence over sin is removed during the Tribulation Hour.

Presently, Christians are depicted as "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world". When they are removed (from the earth), the preservative effect of the "salt" and the repelling effect of the "light" are removed; there is no longer any opposition to satan's power on the earth. When this happens "hell will actually break loose on the earth"!!!


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However, during this time of terrible spiritual darkness upon the earth, the 144,000 will produce the greatest revival in the history of mankind. This evangelism will centre on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. *"To [Jesus] give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins".* [Acts 10:43]. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come.* [Matt. 24:14].

This does not refer to His first coming to earth, nor to the rapture [Rev. 4:1] but to the **revealing of Jesus Christ as King** [Rev. 19:16] To understand this fully one must look back at the preaching of John the Baptist. He preached:

(1) Repentance (one must be baptised for the remission of sins) and

(2) The Blood: behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

This was preached (the repentance and the Blood) to prepare the hearts for the third part of the message: **the coming of the King**. Though Christ was rejected by the Jews when preached by John the Baptist, He will be accepted when this same message is preached by the 144,000 Jews during the time of Tribulation and a mighty revival will take place, with people being saved in the tribulation period.

As a result of this great **Tribulation Revival** a new group of persons appear clothed in white robes in Heaven, which Apostle John does not recognise. Thus, the 3 types of people saved at different times have 3 distinct functions to perform as detailed below:-

- **The Church** (which is saved **BEFORE** the Rapture) is the Bride of Christ and enjoys a 1,000 year honeymoon upon the earth (Rev. 20:4) They rule as kings and priests (1 Pet. 2:9) and (Rev. 1:6)
- **The 144,000 Jews** (Branded by the Holy Spirit) serve as bodyguards of the Lamb and His Bride (Rev. 14:4)
- **The Gentiles** (saved during the Tribulation period) will be Temple servants, waiting upon Christ and His Bride (the Church) They serve in the glorious Temple (described in Ezekiel chapters 40-48) which is set up immediately after Russia (under the names of GOG, MAGOG, MESHACH, TUBAL & ROSH is destroyed (Ezekiel chapters 38 & 39).

Because they (those saved in the Tribulation Period) refused to take upon themselves the mark of the beast, they suffered hardship, hunger and thirst. But when they accepted Christ there suffering was no more. [Refer chapter 7 verses 15-17]

## Vision 5: [Revelations Chapter 8: The Opening of the 7th Seal.]

In chapter 8 we see the opening of the 7th seal. This seal includes the 7 trumpet judgements.

This is such an awesome situation that all of Heaven becomes silent. [refer Rev. 8:1]

Can you imagine it? **Silence in heaven for 30 minutes.**

To really understand the significance of this, one must remember that the angels, the beasts and the 24 elders have been continually praising and worshipping God for centuries, in fact for thousands of years; but now, **there is complete silence in heaven**, in anticipation of what is to come.

These trumpet judgements are not something new. They were prophesied by Enoch in the "Books of Enoch" and referred to again in Jude 14 &15. They were anticipated by Psalmists (Ref. Psalm 96:13). Paul also referred to them in Acts 17:31 and Rom. 1:18.
But before these judgements take place we see an unusual prayer meeting in heaven, (verse 3) where an angel makes an offering of prayers before God.

*Rev. 8:3: And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a gold censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with prayers of all the saints upon a golden altar, which was before the throne (of God the Father).*


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This angel is obviously **The Angel of the Lord: Jesus Christ Himself,** because He ministers both to God and to man (ref. 1 Timothy 2:5). The Saviour appeared many times as the **Angel of the Lord** in the Old Testament.

- He wrestled with Jacob,
- Walked among Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, in the fiery furnace
- And made numerous other visits to His people in the Old Testament.

This Mediator between God and men ***ever lives to make intercession for us*** (Heb. 7:25) and now stands at the altar adding incense (efficacy => efficiency, worth) to the prayers being offered by the saints of God on earth. They are imprecatory prayers (=>to call down harm, especially a curse, on somebody) for judgement, as in Rev. 6:10. They cry: *How long, O Lord, holy & true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* At this point, their prayers have reached the throne of God. **NOW PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED AND JUDGEMENT IS PREPARED.!!!**

In Rev. 8:5 the situation changes. There has been silence in heaven, but now there is fire, cast into the earth, followed by voices, thunder, lightning and earthquakes. The seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets. At this moment the heavenly military says: "Ready"! "Aim"! "Fire"!

## The First Trumpet.

Rev. 8:7. *The first angel sounded and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood and they were cast down upon the earth and one third of all the trees and the grass was burnt up.*

We have no difficulty understanding this verse literally. The same kind of judgement occurred before in Exodus 9:22-23 when God told Moses to stretch forth His hand towards heaven that there maybe hail in all the land of Egypt. When Moses stretched for this his rod towards heaven the Lord sent thunder, hail and fire upon the earth. It happened before – it can happen again!!!

## The Second Trumpet.

Verse 8: *The second angel sounded and a great mountain burning of fire was cast into the sea and a third of the sea was turned into blood.* [probably a giant meteorite.] Again a similar occurrence happened when Moses went before the Pharaoh in Egypt. [Exodus 7:19-21] It happened before – it can happen again!!!

## Third Trumpet

Rev. 8:10-11: *And the third angel sounded and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. And the name of the star is called* ***"wormwood";*** *and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*

Strange: "***Chernobyl*** in the Ukraine Bible means **"Wormwood".**

This judgement also occurred in the days of Moses. (Exodus 7:17) A meteor struck the earth and one third of the earth's water supply became a deadly poison. A similar thing happened in times past. A volcanic eruption in the Aleutian Islands on 21st March 1823 caused the water in that area to become bitter and unfit for human consumption.

God created every star, He knows their exact locations and has named them (Job 9:9) he named the stars Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades and the chambers of the south. He also knows where the star "Wormwood" meaning bitterness, is located. (Ref. Jeremiah 9:15)


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## Fourth Trumpet:

Rev. 8:12: And the fourth angel sounded and a third part of the sun, moon and the stars were smitten and for one third of the day, the sun did not shine, nor did the moon, nor did the stars.

This fourth trumpet deals with the earth's luminaries – the sun, the moon and the stars. Here again this event has occurred before with Moses. Exodus 10: 21-23.

This also compares to Genesis 1:14, because on the fourth day God said: *Let there be light in the firmament of the heavens*. Now at the blast of the fourth trumpet, one third of this creation is extinguished.

**But worse is to come:** An angel is heard flying across heaven crying: Woe, Woe, woe to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.

This correlates with Daniel chapter 9 where the seventieth week is described. The first 3½ years of the Tribulation are not nearly as severe as the final 3½ years. In Matt. 24:8 Jesus described the first 3½ years as **"the beginning of sorrows".** However Jesus referred to the last 3½ years as **the "Great Tribulation".** (Matt. 24:21). As the tribulation hour approaches its climax, the judgements will become more severe and the loss of life greater.

## Trumpet Five: Rev. chapter 9

Rev. 9:1: *And the fifth angel sounded and I saw a star **fall** from heaven unto the earth; and to him was give the key of the bottomless pit.*

The star John sees – a male personage, is without any doubt the devil. In verse 1, The "fall" referred to in Greek in verse 1 is not "fall" - present tense, but "fallen" – past tense. Isaiah describes this fall in Is. 14:12-14. Satan's fall came through pride because he wanted to be co-equal with God. Jesus confirmed this to His 70 disciples: *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven* (Luke 10:18). The fallen one (Satan) is presented with a key to the bottomless pit – and he uses it. The Greek refers to the bottomless pit as the ***"pit of the abyss".*** This term is referred to 9 times in the New Testament and in each case it refers to containment of things which come under God's judgement. In Luke 8:31 the legion of demons in the man pleaded with Jesus not to send them into the abyss, but into the swine instead. If even Satan's demons don't want to go into the abyss it must be a terrible place indeed.

When Satan opens the abyss, the fallen angels are released upon the earth and the smoke ascends from the abyss and darkens the sun and the air.

Verse 3: These fallen angels come out of the pit like locusts and they have the power to sting and cause death. (Ref. 2 Pet. 2:4) But they are told what they can and cannot do and they must obey the Word of the Lord. They can only sting those men which do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads. [That means that these fallen angels have been given power and authority to sting all those people who accepted the number of satan upon their foreheads "666".]

Although they can kill they are not allowed to kill them - **just cause continuous torture for a period of 5 months**.
It is interesting to note that the number 5 being the signature sign of Satanic activity. – hence a 5-pointed star on most Islamic flags.

Verses 4-12 gives the gruesome details of their suffering. V 11 clearly identifies who their leader is. *And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew is **"Ábaddon"** but in the Greek is **"Apollyon".***

This term is only found once in the English Bible but is found 6 times in the Hebrew Bible in: Job 26:6; 28:22, 31:12; Psalm 88:11, Proverbs 15:11 and Proverbs 27:20. The Greek meaning for *Apollyon* means "The destroyer" – a word which certainly describes Satan.


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<u>One woe is past, but another 2 woes are to follow.</u>

## <u>Sixth Trumpet:</u>

**[Rev: 9:13-14]** *Loose the four angels which are bound (fallen angels) in the great River Euphrates.*

As the sixth angels sounds, John hears a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is in the presence of God. [Isn't it strange that that many of the judgements of God are directly linked to the program of atonement?]

Perhaps this is because so many thousands have rejected the message of the altar, which speaks of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Apostle Paul warned the human race of the danger of refusing to hear, acknowledge and understand this teaching. *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; How much more severe will be the punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who have trodden underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of Grace [Heb. 10:28-29]*

**<u>THE REJECTION OF GOD'S WORD ALWAYS BRINGS SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES!!!</u>**

Before us is a scene wherein the altar (the only place where sin can be forgiven) and the horns of the altar (actually touched by the blood) united cry out to God for Judgement ***<u>Therefore</u>*****,** never treat the message of the precious blood of Jesus Christ lightly. Those who do will be sorry !!!.

The sixth angels instructs to release of the four bound angels. This in itself proves that they had previously been bound when they rebelled against God and fell with Lucifer at the time of his revolt against God (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Once the church is safely in heaven, under the protection of Jesus Christ Himself, four denizens (=> a foreigner with a right of residence) from the pit of the abyss, are released upon the earth to do their destructive work.

Earlier we have seen four angels of God holding back the judgement of God, (Chapter 7:1). Now four wicked angels are set free to wreak havoc upon planet earth. They are commanded to execute their judgement in the area of the Euphrates River.

This body of water runs through Iraq and Syria and will become the point or origin for the battle of the ages in the future.

I believe the Gulf War of 1991 was not the fulfilment of this prophecy<u>,</u> **<u>but was simply the beginning of the end, as the final pieces of the puzzle were being assembled for the future.</u>** This is part of the world where satan performed his destructive work against our first parents, Adam & Eve (Gen. 2:10-14). It is the place where Cain murdered his brother Abel (Gen. 4:8) and where mankind made its first move against God (Gen. 11:1-4).
Later, God made His unconditional covenant with Abraham in this location, saying: *Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (Gen. 15:18).*

**<u>This land belongs to Israel and no-one but Israel !!!</u>** and God will see that they get it!!! Proof? Then read: Ex. 23:31, Deut. 11:24, Jos. 1:4. It is confirmed 3 times in scripture, so that settles it!!!

At one time in history the River Euphrates becomes the border of the old Roman Empire – which is presently being restored and will fall under the rule of the Anti-Christ (Rev. 13:1). This area of the world will definitely become the sore point in the world as history progresses, for it serves as both the frontier of the **Promised Land** and the boundary of the ten-toed, ten-horned, western federation of nations that produces the Anti-Christ (Dan. 2:40-41, 7:23:24, and Rev. 13:1). The destruction released upon the earth is now described in Rev. 9:15.


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*Rev. 9:15: And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.*

To get a better understanding of the magnitude of this destruction let us do some figures:

As of 2010, the estimated total population of the world is 6.2 billion souls. In Rev. 6:8 we have seen ¼ of this number die, thus now the earth's population has been reduced down to 4.65 billion. Under the destructive power of these 4 angels mentioned in Rev. 9:15 another ⅓ of the world's population destroyed, leaving 3.12 billion souls,

These 4 angels are eagerly awaiting their timetable. Remember the River Euphrates is Middle Eastern Territory, the location of present day Iraq and Syria. This is the world's present and future tinderbox. The next holocaust will also include the Soviet Union and her allies poised against Israel (read Ezekiel chapters 38: 15-16 & chapter 39). This is why Joel said in Joel 2:20 that he would drive off this northern army into a barren and desolate land (Siberia) with his face towards the eastern sea.

In Ezekiel chapters 38 & 39 Israel is mentioned 18 times as the battlefield. There is no doubt that the Holy Land will become that location for the greatest war on earth for all time. Russia marches against Israel (Ez. 39:1-2 and Joel 2:20) and is then drive back to Siberia, where they gather reinforcements and attack once again. The scope and the intensity of the battle increases until all the nations of the earth are at war with Israel and are assembled at Jerusalem.

God says: ***I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.*** *(*Zech. 14:2) When this prophecy is fulfilled, **the Battle of Armageddon** shall take place. (Rev. 16:16)

This Middle East War will have the largest armies ever seen on earth. (Rev. 9:16) the army is 200,000 thousand, which means 200 million soldiers. (Ezek. 3816) says thou will come up against the nation of Israel , as a cloud to cover the land. They will attack with the latest weapons (Nahum 2:3-4) and be joined in this battle by Red China, after the river Euphrates is dried up, allowing them to attack via the dried up river bed. (Rev.16:12)

Rev. 9:17-19 give a clear example of the types of weapons (including chemical weapons) which are used against Israel in this terrible battle. During this battle, the remaining ⅓ of the earth's population is destroyed. We are now reduced down to an earth's population of 2.1 billion souls.

The following verses point towards this final battle:

- *A fire goes forth before Him (Ps. 97:3)*
- *For behold, the Lord will come with fire (Is. 66:15)*
- *The whole land shall be destroyed by the fire of His jealousy (Zeph. 1:8)*
- *A fire devours before them (Joel 2:3)*
- *For behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven. And a ⅓ part of the trees was burnt up and all the green grass was burnt up*. (Mal. 4:1) & Rev. 8:7)

I believe that in the terrible war, both the natural and the supernatural will be at war. This means that both men and demons will be involved in the Tribulation woes.

Now what happens to the remaining 2.1 souls left on the earth?

Rev. 9:20-21: *And the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk; Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor their fornication, nor of their thefts".*

We have now seen the release of thirteen judgements (13 being the number in the scriptures for man with sin) made up of 7 seals and 6 trumpets. After such a terrible time, under this punishment from God, one would think that the remaining people on earth would seriously consider repentance and eternity. **But alas, this is not the case.** Those who are still alive have hardened their hearts and continue to rebel against God. Even after they have been damned for centuries they will continue to gnashing their


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teeth in an expression of their continued hatred against God. The proof was clearly foretold in the Book of Matthew 13:41-42: *The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom* *all things that offend* *, and them which do iniquity: and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

Verses 20 & 21 above clearly identify 5 major sins which permeate the Tribulation Period, namely:

(1) Occultism, (2) murder, (3) drug abuse, (4) fornication (sexual orgies),

## (1) Occultism

The tribulation period will be a time of pronounced devil worship. At the present time estimates for California in the USA indicate that more than 10,000 occult organisations already exist in this state and it is on the increase. Stores where satanic and sex objects can be purchased are springing up everywhere, both nationally and internationally. **GOD HATES THIS SIN !!!** Not sure about that? Then read the following scriptures:

Lev. 19:31, 20:6, Deut. 18:10-12,

In addition to worshipping devils, the people still on the earth during the Tribulation Hour will make idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood. **GOD HATES IDOLATRY**[16]**.** This practise breaks His Holy Law!! (Ref. the second law given to Moses – Ex. 20:4-5)

Even today, there are people who bow down and worship lifeless man-made idols. Their worship however, is meaningless to God. (Ref. Ps. 115:4-8) God condemns idolatry: Past, Present & Future!!!

During the Tribulation Hour, the world, steeped in occultism and idolatry, progresses to worship the "Image of the Beast" (The Antichrist) , who proclaims himself as God. (Ref. 2 Thess. 2:4) This image described in Rev. 13:15 is undoubtedly the ***abomination of desolation*** spoken of in Matt. 24:15, which is placed inn the temple in Jerusalem and which brings great heartache to the Jews of that day, The present day rise in the occult clearly points towards this prophecy soon becoming a reality.

## (2) Murder

During this same period of time, murder becomes a sport and judgement does not change this situation. The wicked refuse to turn from their wicked ways, They find pleasure in killing people, because possibly terrorism is now so rampant. Jesus said: *But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be* (Matt. 24:37). Noah's day was characterised by violence. *The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence (Gen. 6:11)* Our 21st century is certainly leading us rapidly towards this terrifying Tribulation Hour.

## (3) Drugs, Fornication & Stealing

The final three (3) sins prevalent during the end time are interrelated, and have to do with sorceries: drugs, fornication (the practice of every conceivable sexual sin), and theft. These sins indicate that bodies are being sold (through prostitution) and burglaries are being committed to support a drug habit. Present news headlines indicate that we are already heady down this terrible road.

There are references in the Bible which describe sorcery, sorcerers, witches, witchcraft, and the art of bewitching. Of these at least 5 of these in the New Testament are worth further study, for they have a direct bearing on the situation in the world today – the present day of drugs and drug addiction.

[16] All Buddhists please take note


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In the Old Testament and in the Book of Acts, the term *sorcery* always referred to "witchcraft" or "magic". Throughout the Whole Bible the practise has always been condemned. There are five references in the New Testament where the word *sorcery* refers to drug addiction. In these 5 cases, the Greek word "*pharmakeia"* is used. From this Greek word we get the English word "Pharmacy", or "drug store". (The literal meaning of "*pharmakeia" is=> "an enhancement with drugs", or "to get high on drugs", or to get a kick out of drugs".)* However, medications prescribed by doctors are not included in this condemnation.

**Therefore,** the literal meaning of verse 21 is that men repent not of their enchantment with drugs during the Tribulation Hour. Each of these 5 references must be considered in light of this context.

They reveal: (1) the present world condition is foretold in prophetic scriptures, (2) there will be an inevitable result of drug addiction, (3) The certain and definite judgement upon drug traffickers and pushers, as well as (4) the drug victim, and finally (5) the appraisal of this terrible sin in the sight of God Almighty.

The present day situation will continue to spiral downwards and will be climaxed at the close of the Great Tribulation, when the full cup of its own judgement is measured out upon the people.

The closing chapter of the Book of Revelations graphically portrays the terrible consequences of mankind's enchantment with drugs. What we are witnessing today (2010) is only the beginning of the coming disintegration of society, during the during the Tribulation Period.

Rev. 18:23 states: *For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.* The Greek word used for Sorceries here is "pharmakeia", as already explained

In Rev. 21:8, *But the fearful, and unbelieving and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burns with fire and brimstones:* ***which is the second death***!!! The Greek word for sorcerers changes: The Greek word used for Sorceries here is "pharmakeus", (which means => "The enchanter with drugs" – "the drug trafficker", or "the drug pusher"). This results in the mass use by mankind of drugs on a world, national scale.

At tribulation, there are 8 distinct groups of people who will not get into heaven, namely:

(1) The fearful, (2) the unbelieving, (3) the abominable, (4) the murderers, (5) the whoremongers, (6) the sorcerers, (7) the idolaters, and (8) all liars.

But even in this terrible time and under these terrible circumstances, Jesus still shows His compassion . He comes down to earth as the Angel of the Lord.

Ref. (is. 63:9), (Rev. 7: 2 & 3,) and now in (Rev. 10:1) On three occasions (up till this time) we have seen this Angelic messenger in action. In His first appearing Jesus appears as the Messenger – as the "Prophet, in the second appearing, He appears as "Priest"", and finally as the "King". When He comes down from heaven he is clothed with a cloud, has a rainbow upon His head, exhibits a countenance which shines like the sun, and has feet like pillars of fire. These are the sure signs of Jesus as Prophet. Priest and King.


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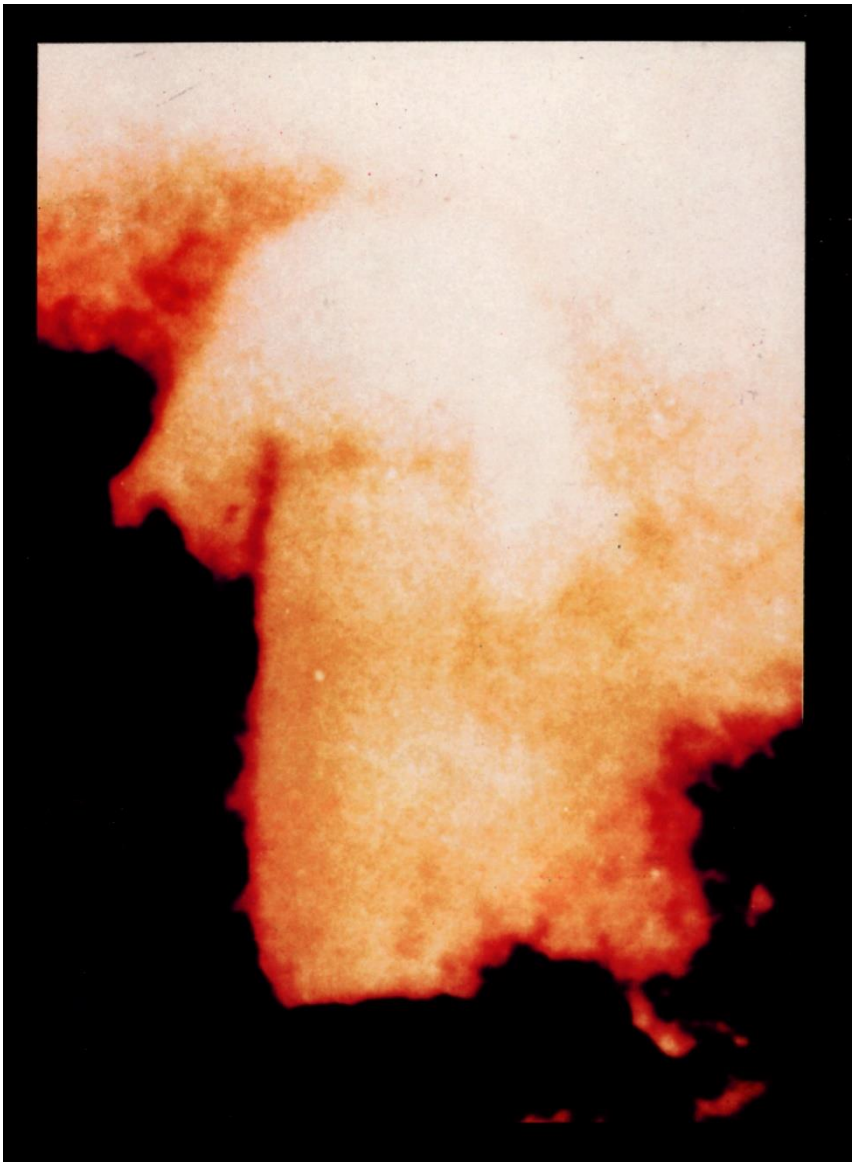

***Beware! He cometh like a thief in the night, Be ever watchful for His coming.***


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# Class Assessment for the Book of Revelations

The class will break up into small groups and undertake the following tasks:

1. Using these reference notes and whatever other sources you have available, the groups will identify the timeline of the Book of Revelations.
2. On this timeline, the group will identify the following events;
    a. Past events
    b. Present events
    c. Future events, by using different colours for each.
3. The group will also indentify:
    a. The Rapture
    b. the 7 trumpets and
    c. the 6 judgements
4. The group will write a short essay of minimum 2,000 words, explaining what they now understand about the Book of Revelation and how they plan to prepare themselves for this event.
5. Each group will be assigned a group mark, which will be given to each member of that specific group.


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# APPENDIX

Reference Colossians 4:15-18 (Message Translation)

***"Say hello to our friends in Laodicea; also to Nymphal and the church that meets in her house. After this letter has been read to you, make sure it gets read also in Laodicea. And get the letter that went to Laodicea and have it read to you. And, oh, yes, tell Archippus, "Do your best in the job you received from the Master. Do your very best." I'm signing off in my own handwriting—Paul. Remember to pray for me in this jail. Grace be with you."***

The last paragraph of Paul's letter to the Colossians confirms that a letter was written and sent to the "Church at LAODICEA" and Paul commanded the church to read that letter and to pass the letter to the church at Colossae onto the other churches for them to read it also.

The church of Laodicea is specifically mentioned as one of the 7 church types in the Book of Revelation by Apostle John, so I was interested to find out what Paul had told them to do – which it appears they failed to do (refer Revelations chapters 2&3)

This got me to searching. If Paul's writings indicated a letter to the Church at Laodicea, then maybe it is still available in some of the old religious writings.

Below is a transcript of that letter, translated from the original tongues. This was published in a document entitled : "The Lost Books of the Bible" published in 1926.

## "THE EPISTLE of PAUL the APOSTLE to the LAODICEANS"

**Points to ponder:**

**v1 He salutes the brethren, v3 exhorts them to persevere in good works, v4 and not be moved by vain speaking. v6 Rejoices in his bonds, v10 desires them to live in fear of the Lord.**

1. Paul an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, to the brethren which are at Laodicea.
2. Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. I thank Christ in every prayer of mine, that ye may continue and persevere in good works, looking for what is promised in the day of judgement.
4. Let not the vain speeches of any trouble you who pervert the truth, that which may draw you aside from the truth, of the Gospel which I have preached.
5. And now may God grant, that my converts, may attain to a perfect knowledge of the truth of the Gospel, be beneficent, and doing good works which accompany salvation.
6. And now my bonds, which I suffer in Christ, are manifest, in which I rejoice and am glad.
7. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation forever, which shall be through your prayer, and the supply of the Holy Spirit.
8. Whether I live or die; (for) to me to live shall be a life to Christ, to die shall be joy.
9. And our Lord will grant us His mercy, that ye may have the same love, and be likeminded.
10. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have heard of the coming of the Lord, so think and act in fear, and it shall be unto you life eternal;
11. For it is God who works in you;
12. And do all things without sin.
13. And what is best, my beloved, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and avoid all filthy lucre.
14. Let all your requests be made known to God, and be steady in the doctrine of Christ.
15. And whatsoever things are sound and true, and of good report, and chaste, and just, and lovely, these things do.
16. These things which ye have heard, and received, think on these things, and peace shall be with you.


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17. All the saints salute you.
18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, Amen.
19. ***Cause this Epistle to be read to the Colossians, and the Epistle to the Colossians to be read among you.***

We see that although the Biblical scholars of the early times did not think this Epistle of Paul worthy to be included into the "Canon of Scripture" [AD 492], it is clear from the writings in the Epistle to the Colossians that such an Epistle did in fact exist, and that it was considered important by Paul, because he told the churches in both cities ***to be sure and read both Epistles in both of their churches.***

Also, in the Book of Revelations Apostle John singles out the Church at Laodicea for special punishment, because it is clear that they did not obey God's word, nor the correction given to them through the anointed Holy Spirit, working on the life of Apostle Paul when he wrote them this letter.

It is said in the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. And it also says that we must not add to, or take away from that which is written in the Book (referring to the scriptures).

I believe that at the time of the first generation church, this was considered to be part of the Holy Scriptures, because it is confirmed in two places in scripture.

Anyway, the lesson to be learned from this is, make sure your church is not like the church at Laodicea. You think you are OK, because of your wealth, your fancy church buildings, lavish facilities, high tech media presentations, etc. but are in fact "spiritually dry" and without faith substance.

Jesus proclaims through the writings of Apostle John that you are not on fire for Him – you are in fact only "lukewarm" and God will spit you out of His mouth on the day of Judgement.

So today, if you are sitting in your comfort zone, thinking you are OK and that maybe you should expand your barns to hold more riches, beware!!! because you are not building up treasures in heaven, but on earth.

The Lord says build up treasures in heaven, because where your treasures are, there your heart will be also.

**So, ask yourself this question: Where are your treasure today?**


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